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GEORGE IV.

Profile by Lawrence in the National Portrait Gallery.

Frontispiece

# GEORGE THE FOURTH

*By*

## SHANE LESLIE

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS (*at Carlton House*):
Phantoms, ye strain your powers unduly here,
Making faint fancies as they were indeed
The Mighty Will's firm work.
. . . In closest touch
With European courts and cabinets
The Imminence of dire and deadly war
Is lipped by special pathways to mine ear.
PRINCE REGENT:
Who the devil is he?
He could not have known me to speak so freely in my presence!
By Gad, sir, I shall have a comfortable time of it in my Regency or Reign, if what he foresees be true!
But I was born for war. It is my destiny! . . .
SPIRIT OF THE YEARS (*in the Overworld*):
Yet but one flimsy riband of its web
Have we here watched in weaving.
THOMAS HARDY ("The Dynasts").

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1926

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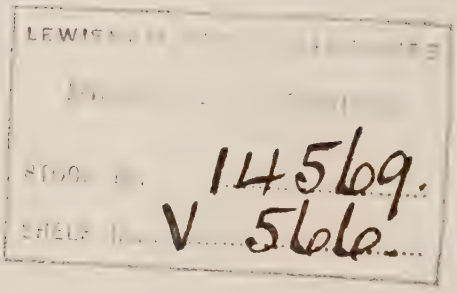
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DEDICATED TO
HIS MAJESTY KING
GEORGE THE FOURTEENTH
WITH THE DIM RESPECT OF A
DECEASED AND FORGOTTEN
AUTHOR

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The split wedding-ring of Mrs. Fitzherbert and the Prince is reproduced on the cover of the book. The ring and the Cosway miniatures are reproduced by leave of the Earl of Portarlington, in whose family possession they are heirlooms inherited from Minney Seymour and George Dawson Damer.

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# GEORGE THE FOURTH

## PRELUDE

GEORGE THE FOURTH died in 1830, so that all living British centenarians were once actually his subjects. Three whole reigns have since passed and an era. The Victorian era with its dull prelude and its brilliant aftermath, to designate the brief reigns of the Fourth William and the Seventh Edward, has passed into pious apotheosis, and George still remains in irretrievable disgrace, with those who make history and those who take it ready-made from the makers. The real virtues of the Victorian Court produced a hypocritical semblance of virtues in the public, who demanded for their new-found spotlessness that darkened background, which writers, whose taste and scent were popular, hastened to extract from the reign and character of George the Fourth. Greville and Thackeray and Justin McCarthy went as far as vulgar power of expression would allow, though perhaps not as far as their contemporaries demanded. Their opinions still pass current. Greville thought "a more contemptible, cowardly, selfish unfeeling dog does not exist" than the subject of our Memoir. Thackeray gibbeted him in his *Four Georges*, a book written rather less in the slow spirit of historical research than for the ready returns of an American lecture-trip. His dissection of George is celebrated in its pitiless devastation, for nothing was allowed to survive his examination except one of Truefitt's wigs, a set of false teeth, and a pile of under-waistcoats. Condemnation was complete in spite of the wiser aside, "we cannot get at the character: no doubt never shall." In his Epitaph upon George, Thackeray lacked finality in the character as much as in the title of *Georgius Ultimus*. His comments, crude and stark, need a commentary, which we venture to offer: "*He never acted well by Man or Woman.*"

Servants and dependents, many friends and some statesmen found otherwise.

"*He was as false to his Mistress as to his Wife.*"

This, the invariable fate of mistresses and the variable fate of wives, is complicated by the fact that he had two wives, of whom with some Scriptural precedent he hated the one and loved the other. Queen Caroline could complain of unkindness and hostility, but not of conjugal falsity, for he gave her early notice that he never could or would love her or live with her again. The women, whom he loved, received more than they could give. To Mrs. Fitzherbert, who gave him most and was his true wife, he gave the chivalrous adoration that men give their mistresses. He was unveering in that adoration for periods of nine and six years, and he was true to her memory in death. Lady Hertford, the Lady Regent of the Regency, and Lady Conyngham, the Queen of the Reign, did not find him utterly false, though he relinquished one to assume his temporal and the other to receive his celestial crown. He was changeful, but slow to change. He made private love as a matter of course or courtesy to beautiful women, but he clung with public passion to the lady who happened to share his passing destiny.

"*He deserted his friends and his principles.*"

Like all Princes he could not very easily become possessed of either. He held certain politics rather than principles, and he changed them. He passed from Radical Whiggery to Die-hard Conservatism. He neglected certain parasites, but he championed his friends while they championed him. His two greatest friends, Brummell and Sheridan, ended obscurely and pitiably, and their distresses like many of their debts are charged upon him. Were their debts his fault? Indirectly there was cause, perhaps, for the price of living in the favour of such a Prince was living above their means as well as above their rank. He did not desert them until they became impossible. They fell by the roadside, and he could not halt his chariot of state. There is no royal road provided in life except for those who are royal.

"*He was so ignorant that he could hardly spell.*"

This simply is not so. He wrote a lavish letter in a legible sweeping hand, and what appear to be mistakes in spelling

such as " chrysis " for crisis, were the spellings of the eighteenth century. His letters as a child are among the best and neatest preserved in the British Museum.

" *But he had some skill in cutting out Coats and an undeniable taste for Cookery.*"

In other words he was Dandy and a Dainty, and, though he was unable to reform the squalid horrors of British cooking, he made the dress of English gentlemen the standard of subsequent European tailors.

" *He built the Palaces of Brighton and of Buckingham.*"

Here praise and dispraise appear to meet like conflicting tides. Buckingham Palace has been found worthy ever since to house the Sovereign in a style more English than the English, while the Brighton Pavilion, more exotic than the exotic, remains the effort of a Kubla Khan to build himself a seaside pleasure house, and to create at home a forerunner and a substitute of Monte Carlo and the Riviera.

Justin McCarthy, in his *History of Our Own Times*, allowed himself generous indulgence into popular journalism. The summary, with which he rounded his paragraph upon the Prince, has been generally accepted and its concluding antitheses much admired: " the malignant enemy of his unhappy father, the treacherous lover, the perjured friend, a heartless fop, a soulless sot, the most ungentlemanly First Gentleman in Europe, his memory baffles the efforts of the sycophant and paralyses the anger of the satirist." Mr. McCarthy was neither baffled nor paralysed, but at least he might have left him the title, which he certainly deserved, since the generous testimony of the magnificent Lord Bellamont placed him with the King of Prussia among the first three gentlemen in Europe, while only modesty forbade his lordship mentioning the third.

The *Encyclopædia Britannica* states with direct simplicity that " George the Fourth was a bad King." If anything, he was the reverse. Whatever his private faults and public mistakes, he never had the Satanic genius to be a consistent rogue and reveller, nor did he wreck the State committed to him. A King must be judged by his Kingdom. The Unjust

Steward was called to give an account of his Stewardship, not of his light amusements. Under George great Ministers administered a great Regency and a useful Reign. George improved the British Constitution, however disastrous he proved to his own. The *Dictionary of National Biography* takes insufficient account of shades and conditions, or even of indirect results. George was a good deal more than "a dissolute and drunken fop," and the old indictment that he was "a bad son, a bad husband, a bad monarch and a bad friend" can be riddled with exceptional behaviour, however true each accusation can be found on occasion. "A dissolute and drunken fop" could not have summoned Brighton out of the sands, rebuilt Windsor Castle, and Capitalised London among Capitals. As a son, he found his father growing hostile, intolerant, and latterly lunatic. As a husband, he worshipped Mrs. Fitzherbert, who soothed him in private, while his public Queen savaged his character. If he was a "bad monarch," England was none the worse for his Regency in critical and for his Reign in difficult days. A Prince shall be judged by his Princeliness. If George was a "bad friend," Fox, Sheridan, Lawrence, Wyatville, and Nash did not suffer by his friendship.

Those who detested and detracted him have invariably been quoted, until Dr. Alington of Eton, who has produced the most charming study of the period (*Twenty Years of English Policy*), concludes that "of the Prince Regent, of whom no good can be said, the less said the better." The critics are believed, the admirers are not. Both may have been wrong, but it is the privilege of History to counterbalance the errors of both. The enthusiasm of Walter Scott and one solitary sonnet of Byron in the Prince's favour are forgotten, but all of evil report is remembered. Few are the dry crumbs of eulogy that fall even from the desks of his professional Biographers, Huish, Percy Fitzgerald, or Lewis Melville.

Huish was contemporary, and delivered much eloquent scandal in periods of the style of Johnson, inserting grandiloquent speeches in the somewhat ridiculous manner which Thucydides bequeathed to the historical imagination; but

Thackeray became possessed of a copy of Huish, out of which he whittled his foolish tirade. After Thackeray nothing was written for a long time. The later Victorian biographer, Percy Fitzgerald, devoted two volumes to George out of the odd hundred to his credit, and found that "jovial, epicurean, shifty, clever and good-natured, he offers one more disastrous spectacle of a life wrecked by self-indulgence and an unbounded love of pleasure." The Edwardian "Lewis Melville" is more tolerant, and confesses that George's ability cannot be denied and that he was the most able of the princes of his House reigning in England. In recent times the historians have begun to turn the balance, and the most erudite of the younger school, Professor Webster, finds him not only "the most human and approachable of princes," but makes a matured challenge in the course of his mighty monograph on Castlereagh which marks the basis of any future study of George the Fourth.

"The Regent's vices and unpopularity have been the theme of many writers and some historians, but few have investigated the exact extent of his power and influence. The pamphleteer and the caricaturist, never so savage as in his day, have depicted a soul and body so monstrously debauched as to appear almost incredible. Yet George handed on a great inheritance to his successor. Either the monarch or the monarchy must have had somewhere big reserves of power. In any case George was indispensable. The whole fabric of the state depended on his existence."

It is thought that his reign imperilled the Monarchy. On the contrary it constitutionalised and guided it behind bulwarks from which it has never been dislodged. Impartial search for opinions cannot fail to flush frail suspicions of white linings to the cloud of opprobrium. Opinions, contemporary or reminiscent, have often the same value for or against. At least they indicate that there are two sides to the cloud. Rare words have even been said in favour of George the Fourth. For instance: "The King rarely missed an opportunity of doing a kind action and always did it in the kindest manner," record

the *Buckingham Papers*, and his sister Princess Elizabeth cried at his death: "In Heaven will all his noble and generous deeds be registered and who ever did more?" Sir William Fraser wrote: "Had he been the self-seeking sybarite, which the Whig poets and writers represented him to be, he would never have taken the infinite trouble, which he did, to act a constitutional part at a terribly difficult crisis in the history of his country." And a modern Whig writer, George Russell, hailed him as "magnificent, sumptuous, stately; majestic and yet benignant, chivalrous with women, playful with children, gracious and cordial with men." Finally, Max Beerbohm in an entertaining Essay correctly states that "so far as I know no attempt has been made to judge this (King) fairly. Thackeray judges him as he judged Barnes Newcome and all the scoundrels he created."

The materials, printed and manuscript, for the Life of George the Fourth are enormous. All the Biographies and all the Memoirs over fifty years of English History contain mention. The cranky Creevey and the cantankerous Croker were of his reign. Greasy Whig and smooth Tory, placemen and gossips both, they enriched posterity with that twilight form of history which is often stranger than fact, and certainly more amusing than fiction. Macaulay exposed Croker as a creature rather than a writer, and Creevey, when eventually published, exposed himself as "a mischievous toad." But both may be accepted as authorities for what inner circles believed in their time. Croker gives the impression that he wrote before and Creevey that he wrote after dinner. Croker is the more reliable, except when he was writing royal reminiscences of Sheridan's last condition or Mrs. Fitzherbert's marriage.

With the *Creevey* and *Croker Papers* the *Greville Memoirs* make first-class material, and we are grateful to the Directors of the British Museum for permission to consult them in MSS., if only to learn that the many omissions made by the Editor in favour of members of the Royal Family only include one in favour of George the Fourth. At times the historian doubts all anecdotes. We have found the famous intrigue of the

Duke of Brunswick attributed by different writers to King George's father-in-law, brother-in-law, and nephew!

The huge mass of references to George in letters, memoirs, libels, squibs and caricatures come under Greville's useful phrase as "probably partly true and partly false." Gathering and sorting such material is like stuffing a gigantic dummy out of the wastepaper heaps of the Regency. The Kingship can be reconstructed by reference to such of the *Papers* as have been published of the great men, whose statecraft George could appreciate, for he realised proudly and humbly that no contemporary monarch was served by a Castlereagh, a Canning, and a Wellington.

We have also used original letters of Mrs. Fitzherbert, both unpublished and published in Mr. Wilkins's *George the Fourth and Mrs. Fitzherbert*. We are grateful to Lord Kerry for some letters of the King in the *Lansdowne Papers*, and to Lord Crewe for obtaining us access to the courtesy of the Archivists in the French Foreign Office. We are also obliged to the Curator of the MSS. Department in the British Museum for access to the *Wellesley* and *Liverpool Papers*, and to the London Library for a suggestive Bibliography.

We have not been able to do more than nibble at the pyramid of books and papers directly or indirectly dealing with George and his Times as Prince, Regent and King. We have used the Historical MSS. Commission's Reports, especially the *Grenville Papers*, also the papers associated with the families of Granville, Buckingham and Jerningham, the *Farington Diary* and especially *Webster's Castlereagh* and *Temperley's Canning*, both final and monumental. Other books are mentioned in the text when quoted. We have consulted the collections of pamphlets and caricatures in the British Museum. Charles Langdale's *Memoirs of Mrs. Fitzherbert* contains Lord Stourton's invaluable record at first hand. By the *Fitzherbert Papers* we refer to the scattered papers bequeathed by Mrs. Fitzherbert to her adopted daughters.



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# THE PRINCE OF WALES

In September of 1761 a German Princess, playing English tunes at sea on her harpsichord, drew nearer and nearer to her temporal and further from her spiritual home. Within a year she became mother of a Prince of Wales. George, eldest son of George the Third, was born on August 12, 1762, at St. James's Palace; present the Queen Charlotte and that " right reverend midwife " Archbishop Secker of Canterbury. A simple woman assisted the Spartan Queen in her labours, which later became almost an annual event. Outside the doors of Birth waited Royal Dukes, Ministers of State, and distantly the English people. The King was in his parlour presumably counting out his money, for he presented the fortunate bearer of the tidings with five hundred pounds, and spent the rest of his life endeavouring to recall his sudden act of generosity in half-pennies.

Rockers, nurses, brothers and tutors were soon provided for the young Prince, and in some profusion. The vaccination of the Prince of Wales and the Duke of York became a point of religious controversy with folk, who argued that, if the King undertook a large family at the popular expense, the small-pox might be a possible Providence for their reduction. In any case the Duchess of Northumberland noted in 1766 that " the Prince of Wales was very full of the small-pox, but Prince Frederick very few. The Prince of Wales confined to his bed, asked if he was not tired with lying so long answered: ' Not at all. I lie and make reflections.' "

The Prince immediately experienced all the disadvantages of his station. Cut off from companions of his own age, he was subjected to a board of instructors and governors, of whom he adored Lord Holderness. The Queen had favoured to be among the number Dr. Dodd, who must have been proficient in handwriting at least, for he was afterwards hung for forgery. All that was possible to human programme was done. The erudite Dr. Markham and the scientific Cyril Jackson gave him that knowledge of Latin and Greek, without which no Georgian

gentleman could consider himself complete. The Prince "showed some taste for Tacitus." So successful were their efforts considered by the Crown that Markham was made Archbishop of York and Jackson Dean of Christ Church. They were succeeded by the supple Bishop Hurd, who was afterwards offered the Primacy of Ireland, according to Percy Fitzgerald, but, according to "Lewis Melville," more probably that of England. Dr. Hurd was assisted by a Senior Wrangler named Arnold, who appears to have become deranged at the prospect of similar promotion, for he "used to wear a mitre about the house" and died insane.

According to the *Dictionary of National Biography* the Prince was "headstrong with his tutors and disrespectful to the King." Dr. Hurd made his celebrated prophecy that he would become "either the most polished gentleman or the most accomplished blackguard in Europe, possibly an admixture of both," which bore some signs of prophecy made after the event. In any case it was a safe remark to make of a Prince, whose path was as thickly set with educational schemes as with temptations.

The alleged disrespect of the Prince for his father was the impatience of a highly strung and highly seasoned youth fretting against the palace bars. Idolised by the public, the Prince and his brothers were liable to the strictest discipline. The Duke of Sussex, for instance, was flogged for asthma and very effectively, since he lived to tell the tale seventy years later, a delightful prevision of the penalties awarded to the ailing in Samuel Butler's *Erewhon*.

So precocious was the religious growth of the Princes that the Duke of York was elevated to the wealthy Bishopric of Osnaburgh before leaving the nursery. At the age of twelve the Prince transcribed an *Address to the Deity*, which remains among the manuscript treasures of the nation. Another sign that their theology was in advance of their years was their sponsorship of a younger brother while under age themselves. It is true that the Bishop of Salisbury found this uncanonical, and was prettily told by "Prince Charming" that his own

sponsors deserved rebuke for omitting to teach their godchild to hold his tongue becomingly. The education of the Princes was varied by a system of Kindergarten, in which the brothers were encouraged to grow their own wheat and to make a form of dolls' bread, of which Their Majesties partook, beholding " with pleasure the very amusements of their children rendered the source of useful knowledge."

Strictness and supervision taught the Prince one thing at least, the necessity and art of improvising the momentary untruth at the expense of the veritable and eternal. In later years when consulting Lady Spencer on the education of his own child he confessed that neither he nor his brothers could speak the truth. " We have been brought up badly, the Queen having taught us to equivocate."

The Queen's influence was not happy. According to Burke, she had one virtue, Decorum, and one vice, Avarice. From both of these her sons were strikingly free. The Prince was soon deprived even of his brothers, who were sent abroad to learn the manners and duties of German princes. The Prince remained in England owing to the accident of his heritage. The spiritual home of the dynasty was still in Hanover.

Some schoolroom letters of the Prince to Lady Holderness survive in the British Museum, French in language and copperplate in style. He writes (August 5, 1774) to ask her to apologise to Lady Carmarthen " *de ce que j'ai fait usage dans ma lettre des mots Ma Chere Amie. Sion Hill m'est venu alors à l'esprit et je n'ai pas pu m'empecher de les mettre. Elle me les pardonnera sans doute, parce que je n'en connais point qui expriment mieux mes sentiments pour elle. Le Roi a ri de bon cœur quand il a lu la lettre quelle a écrite à Mademoiselle qu'elle trouvait qu'elle menait la vie d'un Patriarche!*" The King had made the Pope's death a matter of moralising to judge from another letter (November 1, 1774): " *Quand Papa m'a dit l'état dans lequel on avait trouvé le corps du Pape, cela m'a fait d'abord faire la reflexion que les Princes devraient toujours prendre garde à ce qu'ils font et avoir une conscience nette pour partir pour l'autre monde quand il plaira à Notre Seigneur*

*de les appeller.*" This was the Holiness of Clement XIV. There are references to two political families, whose scions were to play remarkable parts in the Prince's life (July 8, 1774): "*Je tacherai d'imiter autant que je puis trois exemples que j'aime, mon Papa et ma Maman et mon Cher My Lord que j'assure de toute mon amitié. Je vous prie de lui temoigner la joie que j'ai eu quand j'ai oui dire qu'il se portait mieux et qu'il n'avait pas toussé depuis deux jours. Le pauvre Lord Holland est mort.*" This was apparently a false report, for in December his death re-occurs with the note, "*il desirait beaucoup dans ses derniers moments vivre.*"

(December 30, 1774) "*Vous savez sans doute que My Lord Mahon a epousé Lady Esther Pitt. My Lord Chatham n'étant pas assez riche pour lui donner une dot, sa mere y a supplié en partie en lui donnant tous ses bijoux et My Lord Temple son oncle lui a fait present de mille guinés pour s'habiller.*"

After the Court next year the royal children were delighted when their tutor the Bishop had a spill in the Park (January 27, 1775): "*Il y avait un tel brouillard lorsqu'on sortit de St. James que le cocher de l'Êveque de Chester, qui avait pris par le Parc pour eviter la foule, et l'embarras des carosses, engagea le sien sans s'en apercevoir entre deux arbres.*"

### *TRANSLATION*

*August* 5, 1774. . . . "Please apologise to Lady Carmarthen that I should have used the words *My Dear Friend* in my letter. Sion Hill then came to my memory, and I could not prevent myself using them. She will doubtless forgive me because I do not know any better expressing my feelings for her. The King laughed very heartily when he read the letter that she wrote to Mademoiselle about finding she was living the life of a Patriarch!"

*November* 1, 1774. . . . "When Papa told me the state in which the Pope's body was found, I was at first led to make the reflection that Princes ought always to take care of their actions and keep a clean conscience, when Our Lord is pleased to call them to go into the next world."

*July* 8, 1774. . . . "I will try to imitate as far as I am able the three examples whom I love, my Papa, my Mama and

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my dear Lord, whom I assure of all my friendship. I beg you to testify my joy to him when I was informed that he was better and that he had not coughed for two days. Poor Lord Holland is dead."

*December* 30, 1774. . . . "Doubtless you know that Lord Mahon has married Lady Esther Pitt. Lord Chatham not being rich enough to give her a dowry, her mother supplied in part by giving her all her jewels, and Lord Temple her uncle presented her with a thousand guineas to dress herself."

*January* 27, 1775. . . . "There was such a fog going out of St. James' that the coachman of the Bishop of Chester, who took the Park side to escape the crowd and the confusion of carriages, caught his coach without seeing between two trees."

From these creditable documents it is possible to conclude that the Prince had not yet become "headstrong with his tutors" nor "disrespectful to the King." When he came of age, in 1783, he found himself allowed neither liberty of person nor a share in the State. Until he assumed the Regency he was studiously refused high military or political position. It is well known that Kings, having seldom need to exercise jealousy towards their Queens, transfer that natural emotion to their heirs-apparent. George the Third seemed anxious to vindicate the undoubted stupidity overlying his quiet cunning by stultifying his vivacious son. He wished him to possess inwardly all the virtues, including continence and patience, without any public display of his high mettled talents. The reactions were instant and considerable. The Prince made himself a number of friends, who were not likely to be popular at Windsor. The art of waiting for a throne is uneasier than that of wearing a Crown. Horace Walpole noted "the fruits of being locked up in the Palace of Piety." The Prince became acquainted with rakes and blackguards, but he assorted the lowest company with the most intellectual the Kingdom could boast. When he chose his own preceptors, he cultivated a Fox in politics, a Burke in philosophy, and in fine letters a Sheridan. On the clothes-line he studied under an approved though forgotten dandy like Lord Petersham, who qualified him to be later the favourite pupil of Brummell.

Fisticuffs and foils he learned from Angelo, and on one occasion (if the Print is to be believed) fenced ably with the celebrated Chevalier d'Eon without being aware of her sex. The ungentle art of practical joking he acquired from Lord Barrymore and Barrymore's brothers dismally recorded as "Hellgate, Newgate and Cripplegate," while Miss "Billingsgate" Barry taught him the nature of an oath, in which she was probably assisted by Lady Letitia Lade, who could be as piquant with her tongue as with her thong. The Lade family taught the Prince driving, and Her Ladyship, whose first husband had been hung as a highwayman, must have been able to invest the King's road with a peculiar and pathetic interest. The Prince was too heavy to be a good rider, but he drove well, and could take his tandem phaeton to Brighton and back in ten hours. Even as Regent, he shocked grave men by driving his Tilbury through the Park with a groom sitting beside him.

Lord Petersham taught him the lost art of mixing and sniffing his snuff as well as the necessity of varying his snuff boxes according to the season. The heroic day of Dandyism was dawning, when a Beau lost his life trying to save his boots in a fire. George Brummell was yet at Eton dreaming of the first application of starch to the necktie with results that time cannot efface from English family portraiture.

The niceties of French fashion appealed to the Prince no less than the ardours of British sport. He elaborated a new shoe buckle, and in the cold winter of 1784 he appeared with "his delicate hands ensconced in a large black muff which the Earl of March had sent him from Paris." But the hands that wore the muff often donned the gloves, and the presence of the Prince was frequent at Prize-fights, until he had the misfortune to see the death of a pugilist in the Ring, whereat with his fierce streak of humanity he settled an annuity on the widow and swore never to watch boxing again. This was when Tyne killed Earl at Brighton.

The Prince took his seat in the Lords, the strange and exquisite mixture of an old-fashioned Whig and a juvenile dandy, arrayed in a dress of black velvet powdered with gold

and poised upon pink heels, which scarcely signified the redness of his youthful Radicalism, for in politics he always expressed feelings rather than opinions, and with him feelings were always intense. The Prince appears to have been a Whig from the nursery, if the legend is correct that he cheered for Wilkes outside the King's door. He made his maiden speech in the Lords, declaring with Whiggish affectation that he existed by the love, the friendship, and benevolence of the people, and that their cause he would never forsake as long as he lived. And he proceeded to vote for the Whigs over the tempestuous India Bill but in a minority. The King was panic-stricken.

The great Whig Headquarters, Cumberland and Devonshire Houses, were at the disposal of the Prince. The King had quarrelled with the Duke of Cumberland since the Duke's marriage with Lady Anne Luttrell, described by Walpole as "well made with the most amorous eyes in the world and eyelashes a yard long." The King believed in keeping the royal blood sacrosanct and forbade the Cumberlands Court, with the result that the dissipated Duke and his amorous Duchess received and taught the Prince the mysteries of eighteenth-century gambling, Loo and Macao and Faro and, presumably of all the most hazardous, the game of Hazard. Here he fell into the company of Charles Fox, most reckless of gamblers, far-sighted of statesmen, and chivalrous of lovers. Chivalrous in that he eventually married his mistress.

For the times the Prince was not a great gambler—times being when men of talent squandered their fortunes at an occupation, whereat Greville said, "the only pre-eminence is that of success, the only superiority that of temper." Fox was an arch-gambler and held a "Jerusalem Chamber," at which the losses of the night were discounted by the financial scavengers of the day. To the King there were three things anathema, Women and Wine and Whigs. To all three Fox led the Prince, though counselling him at first to be of no political party. But the Prince was naturally drawn from stupidities in power to the brilliances of Opposition. His father was on his brain, and he turned naturally from dislike of the King to a liking for

Revolutionaries. In those days Eton had bred a Fox and Harrow a Sheridan. The Prince chose them out of many to be his witty companions and ready counsellors. Fox was England's foremost sympathiser with the French Revolt, and the Tory caricaturists wore away their spleen and pencils attacking him. Every eighteenth-century scrap-book or portfolio or waste-paper heap unfolds Fox cast in the guise of Satan or *Carlo Khan* or *Cardinal Volpone*, as everything that bore dissipated and blood-thirsty and un-English character or seemed destructive to Conservative minds and to the High Anglican God.

The King was the Tory anvil, on which the great Whig houses had been broken including Holland House, from which Fox sprouted like an avenging sprig. For the Whigs the King had no compunction. They had encouraged the American Revolution in practice, and were playing with the French uprising in theory. The whole power and privilege of the King was hurled against them with the result they promptly rallied round his prodigal son. But the gulf between father and son, between King and Prince, was greater than even that which divides Whig or Tory. It was the complex of Absalom without a father's love. The Prince became the antithesis and antidote of the King; one was bound to be the death of the other. Coexistence was pernicious. They supported rival Playhouses.

The old King must have his due. With cunning rather than cleverness he had played the great game of king-craft and thwarted his domestic enemies, though his army was quite unable to vanquish his foes in the field. The Prince possessing a little genius without character, temperament rather than brain, naturally stepped into his father's obvious vacancies and omissions. The King drank lemonade and played backgammon amid the dreariest and weariest semblance of a Court. The Prince flowed with wine and encouraged the men of genius, who add true splendour to a royal presence. The King creditably pensioned Hume and Johnson, but the Prince lived with Sheridan and Burke. The King founded a Royal Academy, but it was the Prince who fostered the English painters with

lavish speech and patronage. In days when German sages made England their spiritual home, Handel and Herschel were patronised by the King to his undying fame, but it was the Prince who made Handel the choric accompaniment of the dynasty. The King remained faithful to an ugly woman, while the Prince was faithless to several beauties. The King was a miser, and the Prince was a spendthrift. The Prince's bill for plate appalled Parliament, while the King was recorded to have borrowed plate for one of his rare Balls from wealthier but uninvited subjects. Lastly, the King was a narrow Protestant, while the Prince was showing a Whig's enlightened sympathy with the penalised and diminished Catholics. The Catholic Question wrapped up with Ireland was the form Revolution took in England. The King and the Prince, father and son, were destined to descend to their graves under its sulphurous alarms. At the time the King possessed, what the Prince had not developed, a conscience; and a King's private conscience can easily become a public menace. The conscience of George the Third was anti-Catholic, anti-Irish, anti-French, anti-American, and most of all anti-the-Prince-of-Wales, whose excesses hurt him far more than Washington's success.

The Prince learnt to return his hostility while preserving the decencies. When a sot at Lord Chesterfield's proposed a short reign to the King, the Prince rose and drank a bumper to his long life, which the irony of fate certainly fulfilled. In one habit only father resembled son, in the begetting of unpaid debts. Lord Stanhope remarks in his *Life of Pitt* that "the public had some right to complain of the result. There was very little of splendour in the King's Court, and very little of morality in the Prince's." The English nobility and gentlemen of the day did not especially require morality, but they rightly demanded splendour of the Eighteenth Century.

The Prince took possession of the moribund Palace called Carlton House, and offered thence some splendour of entertainment. He expected splendour of dress, splendour of debauchery, splendour of talents in return. At Devonshire House he met the two finest minds amongst contemporary

women and men, Georgiana Duchess of Devonshire and Sheridan. He loved the Duchess, and Sheridan loved him. During the long friendship which followed, Sheridan came closer to the Prince than any man. It was "Sheridan's irreparable misfortune," says his biographer Fraser Rae, "to have been honoured with the friendship of the Prince of Wales. He served the Prince with unswerving and true Celtic devotion, and was calumniated by him after death had sealed his lips." The family of Sheridan were sensitive to the Prince's death-bed succour, and returned his alms. The Prince was under the impression that drink had brought Sheridan to squalid penury, but after his death he spoke of him as a proud great man and a "firm and sound adviser," acknowledging "certain conscientious scruples operating against Sheridan's own interests." Sheridan considered the Prince's friendship "the just pride of his life." Each gave the other of his best. The Prince treated other friends as foils and fools, but Sheridan was one of the few, whose genius he had the princely genius to recognise and salute.

The Prince took to politics like a duck to the stream, leaving the Windsor hencoop to cackle alarm. The Whigs were pro-American, and studiously copied the dress of Washington. Their solution for the American question was "a halter for Lord North at a price of half-a-crown." The King was more worried by the secession of his son than of the States. Chancellor Thurlow with grim gaiety advised him to put Fox and the Prince in the Tower if he wished for peace. But North fell from office, and Fox became Foreign Secretary in what the King stigmatised as "my son's ministry." When the *Gazette* with unconscious irony announced that "His Majesty was pleased to appoint Mr. Charles Fox," Walpole wrote: "This is not the Lords' doing, but the Commons', and it is marvellous in our eyes." The Prince now reasonably looked to the Whig Ministry to increase his income. They offered him an allowance of a hundred thousand a year, which the King described as a way "to sacrifice the public interests to the wishes of an ill-advised young man." To save the public expense but really his own popularity, the King offered to pay half himself and

the Prince, not to be outdone, gave way according to Fox, "in the handsomest manner." In the end the Prince's debts were paid by the Commons, and the revenues of the Duchy of Cornwall added to his income. Partly as a popular sop and partly to annoy the King, the Prince made some dramatic retrenchments by closing Carlton House and selling his horses and carriages at auction. With dangerous indiscretion he accepted a loan from the Duke of Orleans, but, whether the Prince was assisted publicly or privately, his debts never ceased to accumulate by a motion of their own.

On the first opportunity the King dismissed the Whigs from the office they were unable to recover for many bitter years. But Fox was personally invincible, and won the Westminster election against the King's Ministry with the active assistance of the Prince and "the Duchess of Devonshire and the other women of the people," as the virtuous Pitt wrote to the virtuous Wilberforce. On Whiggish banners, however, the fame of the Duchess was blazoned "sacred to female patriotism." The victory was wildly celebrated at Carlton House, while the indignant King was passing in procession to open his new Parliament. In the spirited manner of Georgian politics the Conservative mob took an early occasion to hoot the Prince's residence, while the King removed his birthday from the list of future festivities, since it was unfortunately found irremovable from the calendar of the past. Out of high spirits and an adventurous heart the Prince backed the Whigs against the Tories in the same way that he backed Turkeys against Geese in a famous walking match. In each gamble he was on the losing side, but in sharing the unpopularity of the Whigs he learnt the lesson that popularity should be neither the gonfalon nor the goal of Princes.

The particular party to which the Prince might join himself in politics was of small importance compared to choice in matrimony, and on this point the King had guarded him with præ-prudential wisdom. We can picture the humdrum Sovereign spinning plans for the future of his dynasty, paring half-pennies to keep his growing family in cash, weaving the

Royal Marriage Act of 1772 to preserve them from the entangling alliances of youth, and finally sinking a great Mausoleum to receive them dead. But the Fates overweave the best-woven plans of princes, and the Royal Marriage Act brought a run of family tragedy, in which the Greeks would have seen the royal insolence to the god of Love punished by his own madness and the misery of his sons. The Act promulgated the quasi-Deification of the royal House of Brunswick. The princes were required to marry within a closing circle.

Plainly, no descendant of the body of the Second George was allowed to marry outside the Blood without the consent of the King. Those who did, were required to give a year's notice pending the approbation of Parliament. Those who did not obey on these points found their marriages of romance and secrecy voided and nullified. God, who presumably works in these affairs by channels of inspired love rather than of Court convention, might join such marriages together, but find the union set asunder by His Majesty's Privy Council. The Act had been fiercely attacked by Burke and Fox in the Commons, but it was passed by the gentlemen and Lords of England, whose interests it did not affect, except as an indirect insult to their daughters. And it received the assent of the King, whose House it was quickly destined to extinguish in the male line from the throne. Of the King's seven sons, two sons succeeded, but no grandson. His House was doomed.

The House of Brunswick had been contented to marry *Frau* after *Frau*, and even to import German ladies. But with the brothers and sons of the Third George there came a welcome change in taste. The Royal Dukes looked upon the daughters of Albion and beheld that they were fair. The Guelphs became as uncurably romantic as the Stuarts. The Duke of Cumberland, brother to the King, was the immediate cause of the Royal Marriage Act by espousing the beautiful and amorous Lady Anne Luttrell, and the passing of the Act was immediately met by the announcement of his brother of Gloucester that five years previously he also had married a widow, the fair relict of Lord Waldegrave and natural child of Sir Edward

Walpole. Beauty is the monitress of chivalry, and Gloucester announced that, though he had married like a boy, he would defend his marriage like a man. The King was compelled to give way, and the Duchess entered the sacred family.

The Prince came too late upon the scene to slip like his uncles through the meshes of the Law, which, as it affected the younger members of the family, might be described as a Prevention and Provision for the better regulation of the hearts of Princes. By statute they were not free in conscience. They were now expected to love according to Act of Parliament. It remained to be seen how soon Cupid would drive a coach and six through the Act aforesaid. As the Princely brothers came of age, they dallied with illicit amours, and knowing that their wives would be certainly German and probably hideous, it is hard to blame them. Of the Prince writes the courtly Mr. Jerdan: "At the age of eighteen the first memorable draught of the Cup of Circe was openly quaffed in an amour with the celebrated Perdita."

As "Prince Florizel" he wooed and won Perdita, the beautiful Mrs. Robinson. She was the most beautiful actress of her time, painted by Reynolds, loved by the "wicked" Lord Lyttelton, by "fighting" Fitzgerald and by the Prince of Wales. What more could an Englishwoman have desired? Envy rather than pity seems to be her proper meed, even when the Prince terminated her two years of bliss at two days' notice. Of his preliminary amours Perdita was always chief, and it seems that the lovers remembered. The lady's affection lingered in heart-broken poems and sentimental Memoirs. The Prince unfortunately had also indulged his adventure in literature, and written Perdita not only a number of love-letters but a bond for twenty thousand pounds, being always as generous as Solomon to those whom he loved. The disturbed King was constrained to purchase the letters for the "enormous sum" of five thousand pounds, though it must have been a satisfaction to him to write to the Prime Minister that "I am happy I never was personally engaged in such a transaction which perhaps makes me feel this the stronger." The monetary bond was placed in the judicious hands of Fox,

who commuted it for a pension of five hundred a year, and the bargain cannot have been as disagreeable as such affairs generally are, for Walpole records that in 1782 "Charles Fox is languishing at the feet of Mrs. Robinson." On the other hand, Fox's lady-love, Mrs. Armistead, became a temporary flame of the Prince, which may account for the King's insane hatred of Fox as the corrupter of his son. Eventually Mrs. Robinson joined the literary staff of the *Morning Post*, where her fugitive verse appeared over the name of "Tabitha Bramble." But she could not complain even in song. For two years she had possessed "that being to whom partial millions were to look up for protection," as she archly expressed it.

The lovers, however, always remembered, and when Mrs. Robinson fell into penury, the Prince wrote, "should it be within the compass of my means to rescue you from the abyss you apprehend that is before you, I need not say that the temptation of gratifying others, and by the same means making oneself happy is too alluring to be neglected a single moment." It was nice of him to describe helping a forlorn adventuress as a form of temptation, and Mrs. Robinson remained true to him till death, when she desired to be buried at Old Windsor, and there rests nearer to him than any who loved him in life.

In these days the *Dictionary of National Biography* describes how "he lived in borrowed houses, travelled in borrowed chaises, and squandered borrowed guineas." Fox had found that he did not disdain a borrowed mistress. But it must be remembered that people were more delighted to lend to the Prince than he was to borrow. So passed his days of spice and salad. Lightly he was constrained to look upon light women, but when he met and admired the virtuous, he offered them all the honour he could spare. His love and admiration of the Duchess of Devonshire did not blind her to his faults, but her analysis of his conduct was impartial, regretting that his "aptitude to yield over his better opinions to foolish and even ridiculous counsellors, if they happen to convince him, and the same facility that made him promise places has driven him into

Society and manners unworthy of him, for his talents are good and his deportment superior in grace to anything I ever saw. And however he may have appeared to deviate from strict honour or to be capricious and unsteady, I cannot believe his heart to be bad, and he has obeyed the star of the moment which has been in general malignant."

The Prince was easily led. Walpole described how Cumberland " the eldest Uncle has got possession of the eldest nephew and sets the father at defiance." Walpole, having kissed the hand of George I., declined to watch " the revels of his great-great-grandson," whom he hailed as *Princeps Juventutis*. To Walpole and to Prince Fox appeared the " hero in Parliament, at the gaming table, at Newmarket." Between Fox and Pitt the Prince chose Fox. Pitt was the soul of a materialist country, but Fox had the material of a cosmopolitan soul. He was generous to the France and the Prince whom Pitt made into enemies. The last page of a vital letter Fox wrote to the Prince survives among the *Fitzherbert Papers* (August 8, 1784): " . . . Royal Highness confidence and assuring you that, when I know your real views you shall not find in me a troublesome adviser but a friend, if I may presume to use such an expression, ready to render you any service consistent with his real attachment to you and who, when he cannot serve, will certainly never betray you. . . ."

A singular test was coming.

BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM
BROCKLEY
BRANCH

# MRS. FITZHERBERT

The women passing into a man's life become transient passions or remain memorable loves. Great love affairs have been rare in history, but they have seldom failed to leave the world without a poem or a tale, an epic or a romance. Strangely and unexpectedly the House of Brunswick furnishes one of the great love-stories of the world.

In 1784, whether at Richmond or the Opera, the Prince caught first sight of Maria Fitzherbert, and fell into transports of love. Mrs. Fitzherbert's psychology is not as inscrutable to the historian as the Prince's. There were no shades and contradictions in her character. Her picture needs no varnish, and her blameless life no apology. Her career presents one of the strange freaks of fate. Born a Smythe (which is presumably a mediævalism for a commoner name) of Acton Burnell, she successively married a Weld of Lulworth and a Fitzherbert of Swynnerton, both of the old Catholic stock. The Welds were princely and had entertained the King at Lulworth, one of the places where it was claimed he had hazarded his famous inquiry as to how the apple entered the dumpling. When one of the Welds was raised to the Cardinalate later, Lloyd's *Life of George the Fourth* added that "the brother-in-law of Mrs. Fitzherbert (he was really her nephew) has recently been raised to the dignity of a Cardinal, if not precisely through British influence, not improbably out of compliment to His Majesty." Rome, however, may be credited with being well advised and circumspect in creating the Cardinal, and his Red Hat may be better taken as an indirect appreciation of the virtue of his aunt. This was not until 1829. To return to 1784.

Mrs. Fitzherbert had been left a widow twice before she was twenty-five. The occupations of Catholics were then penalised, and their relaxations were obscure. The prospects of a Catholic dowager were not gay, but Mrs. Fitzherbert combined the Faith of Merry England with a not less merry widowhood. Her love of simple pleasure and her respect for revealed

religion enabled her with irreproachable good sense to make the best of both worlds. The town-house out of Park Lane left to her by her second husband became a place of pleasant society as well as of reunion for depressed Catholics. She was good-looking without being a prodigy of beauty. Her colouring of hair and skin was perfect, and her white bosom was famous. She was sensible without being clever, and fascinating rather than seductive. Character took the place of intellect in her composition, and in the long run of life character carried her further than the wit and beauty of many rivals. As soon as the Prince declared his love, she declined any unhallowed connection. A mock marriage at Carlton House, to which she brought the Duchess of Devonshire at the last moment, neither allayed the passion of the Prince nor the scruples of his *inamorata*.

Well born, well dowered, and well widowed, Mrs. Fitzherbert felt no temptation nor inducement to become mistress of the Prince, and withdrew to the Continent. For a Catholic to queen English society or appear at Court as the wife of the heir-apparent seemed perilous and impossible. Stifling all ambitions, she went for a year into exile to give his ardour time to change or collapse. It had the opposite effect, and drove him into a frenzy of flame and despair. The love-sickness of the Prince was indubitable. It came upon him as it came upon few, even in a generation of gallantry. His love for Mrs. Fitzherbert was distinct from his other love affairs. He fell in love with her at first sight, which was the case with all the beautiful women he met, but he went so far as to make her his wife. It is true that he reluctantly conferred this honour upon one other, but Mrs. Fitzherbert was the only woman to whom he ever returned after a break. She was the only one whose image he carried into the tomb.

The Prince had faced the Royal Marriage Act and decided never to make a marriage of public policy, though every Princess in heresy or schism cherished hopes. A suggested match with the Princess of Orange led to no blossoms. The Prince settled that the future children of the Duke of York

should succeed to the throne, and made Mrs. Fitzherbert promise to marry nobody but himself. She meantime continued to live abroad, where the Marquis de Bellois offered her his soiled liaison. The Prince possessed not only a power of present persuasion, but a gift for following his quarry abroad with ardent letters. Some of his missives were among the longer love-letters in the language. They approached the Essay rather than the Sonnet in form. Mrs. Fitzherbert once showed Lord Stourton a document of thirty-seven pages from the princely pen. The Prince was a chivalrous falsifier of probabilities, and he assured Mrs. Fitzherbert that his father would connive at their union. Mrs. Fitzherbert naturally questioned what form of union, but the Prince was in earnest. Not only did he testify his honourable intentions by constant bouts of male hysteria and medical bleeding, but he offered to resign his rights to the Crown. She herself began to be torn between feelings. Her supernatural sentiments had sent her abroad to escape the approximation of sin. But her natural feeling, hitherto hardly roused by elderly and old-fashioned husbands, was fired by first love, and that love for the most charming and good-looking Prince in Christendom. Not many women would have stayed a year abroad and avoided all the fingering of pelf and politics that was open to the only beloved of the heir to the Throne.

Seldom was a woman placed in stranger predicament, when Mrs. Fitzherbert consented to return to England and the Prince offered her marriage within the terms of the Catholic Church. Then it was that she felt she should not and could not hesitate any longer. She was divided between her legal duty to the King and her devotion to a Prince, whose heart and hand were subject to Acts of Parliament. She decided to cling to her canonical honour in the secret eyes of the Church, and to let all else go hazard. The Prince was prepared to run greater risks, for by allying himself with a Catholic he forfeited the Throne. The Act of Succession, as well as the Royal Marriage Act, had to be defied. Fox wrote to warn him on December 10, 1785, adding words which Lord John Russell thought best

omitted from his Memoir of Fox: " . . . *if there was no marriage I conclude your intercourse would be carried on as it ought, in so private a way as to make it wholly inconsistent with decency or propriety for any one in public to hazard such a suggestion* . . . if I were Mrs. Fitzherbert's father or brother I would advise her not by any means to agree to it, *and to prefer any other species of connection with you to one leading to such misery and mischief.*" The italicised words were omitted by Lord John Russell.

However, Mrs. Fitzherbert and her family preferred " misery and mischief " to mortal sin in the eyes of the Church, and the certainty of excommunication in the eyes of men. A dramatic and princely decision was made. Five days after Fox's letter was written, the Prince married Mrs. Fitzherbert in the presence of her uncle Mr. Errington and her brother John Smythe in her own house, which stood near, where the Marble Arch now stands at the corner of Park Street and Hereford Gardens (December 15, 1785). Fox was not present even in spirit, for the Prince had written in answer to his warning: " Make yourself easy, my dear friend. Believe me, the world will soon be convinced that not only there is [not], but never was any ground for these reports." This was the letter on which Fox later denied the marriage in the Commons, but it is observable that it contains no specific mention of Mrs. Fitzherbert, and that one of the negatives has been added by the editors. Mr. Wilkins says: " The Prince meant to say ' there not only is not.' " But the Prince also meant to throw salt in his friend's eyes, and wrote with purposeful vagueness.

Two Protestant clergymen refused to perform the ceremony, but the Reverend Robert Burt, who might be described as sporting, decided to take the risk for a " monkey " of money and the promise of future preferment. He gambled on the King's life and eventually lost, dying six years later to the entire oblivion of his name, except amongst Mrs. Fitzherbert's secret papers, wherein it was preserved for over a century like a fly in amber. No doubt Mr. Burt conscientiously desired a Bishopric, but meantime he was liable to be

transported to the newly-formed parish of Botany Bay. Though his name was kept secret, he was known to the author of the *Colchester Diary*, who wrote: "October, 1796. From Burton I learnt that the Rev. Mr. Burt of Twickenham actually married the Prince of Wales to Mrs. Fitzherbert and received £500 for doing it, as he himself declared to his family on his deathbed." This is the only contemporary account proven accurate in history.

Mr. Burt performed an illegal but canonical marriage, causing a very curious state of affairs. The marriage was void in the eyes of the State, though the minister's priestly Orders were valid, but in the eyes of Mrs. Fitzherbert's Church, though the minister's Orders were invalid, the ceremony held good. It was not the first time that the Divine and Statutory law had clashed in the Realm. The marriage required courage, and both had shown it. Risk is the halo of romance, and the relations between the Prince and Mrs. Fitzherbert retained that sense of delicious peril, which a conventional marriage would have been quick to cloy. It was certainly a case covered by the *Croker Papers*, where they allude to men who "to their mistresses pledge themselves so deep that they create a new point of honour to be got over." For wife or mistress the Prince was pledging his Crown, and Mrs. Fitzherbert her honour. Each had placed themselves utterly in each other's power. The Prince gave her a certificate of her marriage, and she left her honour and virtue and happiness in his hands. Her family motto, *regi semper fidelis* ("faithful ever to my King") was often to be a source of thought and strength, for she never betrayed her trust, and the beauty of her fidelity was only heightened by the inevitable perfidy, which Destiny rather than desire hastened upon her royal husband.

The newly-married pair honeymooned in secret, and then faced the defeating difficulties of their situation with the equanimity of lovers. The Prince gave Mrs. Fitzherbert a public chivalry, equalled only by her private discretion. When he found people shy of receiving her, he made a royal request. In the case of Lady Cholmondeley, he asked her to receive

his beloved, which she did so sincerely that, after their separation, she refused to drop her at his second request. One of the results of the marriage was that Mrs. Fitzherbert ceased to go to Court. The Queen eyed her very suspiciously, and when she saw what Macaulay described as " the voluptuous charms of her to whom the heir of the throne had in secret plighted his faith," in the Prince's box at the trial of Warren Hastings she retired, and requested that the insult would not be repeated. The Catholic view appears in the *Jerningham Letters* (March 6, 1786): " God knows how it will turn out. It may be to the glory of our belief, or it may be to the great dismay and destruction of it." But even a bitter-penned Lady-in-Waiting like Lady Charlotte Bury could write that Mrs. Fitzherbert was " the most faultless and honourable mistress that ever a Prince had the good fortune to be attached to." Rumours spread like wildfire, and the *Morning Post*, as soon as December 17, 1785, announced " a very extraordinary Treaty on the tapis between a beautiful young widow who resides about ten miles from London in the County of Surrey, and a gentleman of high rank in the neighbourhood of St. James." More extraordinary the same sapient journal announced the lady's terms which history verified—six thousand pounds a year (granted by the Prince on separation), her lover's liveries and Ducal rank when it shall be in his power (both were offered, and one was accepted from the Prince's eventual successor to the Crown). As early as March 21, 1786, a Caricature of *The Wedding Night* was published of the Prince and Mrs. Fitzherbert dancing to a fiddle, while a torn marriage certificate lay on the floor. Another portrayed *The Lovers' Leap*, as they jumped a broom together in imitation of a gypsy wedding.

As long as the witnesses were faithful to the secret, it was impossible for the public not to believe Mrs. Fitzherbert was the Prince's mistress. Though her brothers lost their heads socially and presumed on their sister's position, they did not reveal the terms, on which she had compounded, which though guessed again and again, remained a matter of intense curiosity to society. Was or was she not his wife ? If she was, then, as

PLATE I.—MINIATURE OF THE PRINCE OF WALES, BY COSWAY, WITH THE EYES OF THE PRINCE (RIGHT) AND MRS. FITZHERBERT (LEFT), BY COSWAY

Facing p. 38

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Macaulay wrote: "Even in grave and pious circles his Protestant mistresses gave less scandal than his Popish wife." Mistakes were bound to follow, though the general view became indulgent. Mrs. Fitzherbert was dining with the Lord Mayor, who toasted the Prince and called on her to drink to her friend, whereat "the Judges endeavoured to preserve their gravity and the company smiled." Mary Frampton wrote in her *Journal:* "If ever the Prince loved any woman it was she; and half London, had he thrown the handkerchief, would have flown to pick it up. Mrs. Fitzherbert's very uncomfortable life since her connection with the Prince affords as strong a lesson as ever was given in favour of virtue, for she never derived any benefit from it. Her chariot was without armorial bearings, nor had she worn any, since her liveries by accident resembled the Royal ones, the Fitzherbert livery being red turned up with green."

In the street the romance was well liked, and a popular ballad often delighted the lovers—with allusion to their love—

> "On Richmond Hill there lives a lass
> More bright than Mayday morn,
> Whose charms all other maids' surpass—
> O rose without a thorn!
> * * * * *
> I'd Crowns resign to call her mine,
> Sweet Lass of Richmond Hill!"

The winning of Mrs. Fitzherbert steadied the Prince to face dizzy altitudes of debt. The sheriffs were upon him, and rather than impoverish his creditors or suffer further insults, the Prince gave the King due warning, and sold up his establishment. But what was saved by retrenching on Carlton House went in extending his Pavilion at Brighton. Brighton was a salubrious fishing village, which visitors once had the leisure to pronounce Brighthelmstone. In a day fortunate for the South Coast and the Southern Railway, the Prince bought a farmhouse on the Steine for bathing, and proceeded to build a pleasure-palace which would have startled Kubla Khan. In design it appeared to be "like a madhouse

or a house run mad." Wilberforce described it as though St. Paul's Cathedral had had a litter of cupolas. The Prince humorously excused his taste by saying that if he had had French decorations, his furniture would have been accused of Jacobinism ! The Pavilion with its marble pillars and Chinese gallery and its Dome with Oriental fantasies within and without, and stables copied from the Paris Corn Market, signalised his break with British convention and insularity. The caricaturists exoticised his three ostrich plumes into three peacock's feathers. He gave his imagination full weigh, and if he could not make Mrs. Fitzherbert chatelaine of Carlton House or Princess of Wales, he made her the Queen of English watering-places. The town of Brighton rose in answer to his genius, for genius prefers to be ridiculous than ineffective.

The Prince's debts grew rather than decreased after his marriage, and this he attributed accurately to the smallness of his allowance. He was ready to meet the King on the matter, but the King wished him to give up Fox, and later Mrs. Fitzherbert. This he refused to do, and became so impoverished, that Mrs. Fitzherbert had to pay his journeys to Newmarket, and he himself used the common postchaise between London and Brighton, which was akin to travelling third-class in modern times. The King was uneasy, because he himself had frequently presented Parliament with debts which, however appropriate in a King, were considered unfilial and unpatriotic in his son. In 1787 the Prince's friends brought the matter into Parliament.

The debate immediately brought mysterious hints made delicately obvious by Pitt, but broadly forcible by Mr. Rolle, the member for Devon. It was obvious that Tories had wind of the ceremony with Mrs. Fitzherbert. Still they were only guessing, and Sheridan reduced Pitt to apology, but Fox could only unhorse Mr. Rolle by repudiating the marriage grossly and flatly (April 30, 1787). Mrs. Fitzherbert was left to the mercy of caricature. Gillray portrayed her as " Dido Forsaken " seated upon her pyre with zone of chastity torn and crucifix in hand, while the Ministers blew the coronet and triple

plumes from her head, and the Prince escaped with Fox in a boat named "*Honour*" under a ragged sail, trimmed by Burke disguised as a Jesuit. It was not for another year that Gillray dared to guess the marriage ceremony itself under the label or libel—"Wife and no Wife, or a Trip to the Continent." In a Catholic Church abroad Burke read the book over the couple, while Fox gave the lady away, and Lord North as coachman sat fast asleep. It was followed by "The Morning after Marriage, or a Scene on the Continent," which failed to make the handsome and romantic pair ridiculous even under a test that few couples could abide. It was difficult to say who had been most awkwardly placed, Fox or the Prince or Mrs. Fitzherbert, to whom the Prince instantly broke the grim news that Fox had declared to the Commons of England that they were not man and wife. She remained pale and silent, as though the curse of the Royal Marriage Act had reached her. The Prince tried to soothe her feelings by sending Sheridan, after Grey had refused, into the arena to defend her defencelessness. This the Irishman did without impugning Fox, who was left to find out for himself that he had not only exceeded his instructions but the truth itself.

In the *Croker Papers* the Prince as King stated that "Sheridan's interference was so far as I was concerned perfectly accidental. Gallantry to the lady, and an effort to keep her and Fox on good terms." Sheridan asserted that there was another person unnamed "on whose conduct truth could fix no just reproach, and whose character claimed and was entitled to the truest and most general respect." This statement was well received in a house of English gentlemen, although, in connection with that of Fox, which was not denied, it must have seemed like a scene from Sheridan's own Comedies. Society called upon Mrs. Fitzherbert in a mob. The Duchess of Gloucester rallied to her like a sister caught in the Act of Parliament, that she had only escaped herself by time, while the Duke sent her "a cestus done in oyster shell," adding: "I hope you will think it pretty." Fox moved abroad, followed by Mrs. Fitzherbert's life hatred. The Prince had to choose

between them, and chose his wife. Lord George Gordon, the Protestant fanatic, created a minor riot at her doorstep by insisting on learning her "proper title," until her brother Wat threatened a horsewhip, and the indignant lord communicated to the Prime Minister "the over-bearing disposition of the Papists." The Archbishop of Canterbury decided that matters were "very odd," but general opinion was expressed by Mrs. Creevey that "if she is as true as I think she is wise, she is an extraordinary person and most worthy to be beloved."

The Rev. Horne Tooke issued an ironical letter accepting Mrs. Fitzherbert as "legally, really, worthily and happily for the country Her Royal Highness the Princess of Wales," insisting that the marriage of the Prince with Mrs. Fitzherbert was "neither unusual nor improper, nor impossible nor illegal." After laughing at consciences which strained at the gnat of Popery while they greedily swallowed the camel of corruption, he concluded with a mischief-making assurance that she must have conformed to the Protestant religion, and pointing out that "three out of six sovereigns of the House of Stuart, and three out of five sovereigns of the House of Tudor" were the issue of marriages between royalty and lesser breeds.

Mrs. Fitzherbert found she had married a handsome, rollicking boy with keen appetites and a reckless sense of humour. A glimpse of him appears in the *Portarlington Papers*. The Lady Portarlington of the time went to Lady Hopetoun's ball, and wrote (April 6, 1787): "Lo! at twelve o'clock in reeled H.R.H. as pale as ashes, with glazed eyes set in his head, and in short almost stupified. The Duchess of Cumberland made him sit down by her, and kept him tolerably peaceable till they went down to supper, when he was most gloriously drunk and riotous indeed. He posted himself in the doorway, flung his arms round the Duchess of Ancaster's neck, and kissed her with a great smack, threatened to pull Lord Galloway's wig off and knock out his false teeth, till some of his companions called for his carriage." Which was doubtless all very light-hearted and amusing.

London looked on laughingly. There was a craze for caricatures and printed gossip about the lovers, which the license of the time indulged. The real love-letters of Mrs. Fitzherbert and the Prince were eventually destroyed, but a forged correspondence was printed, and sold by none other than Mr. Walter the founder of *The Times*. They were suppressed, but a copy of these "letters between an illustrious person and a Lady of Honour" survives in the British Museum. The only inkling to the supposed letter-writer appeared in words attributed to the Prince's Guardian Angel, who thus suitably refers to the King:

> "When crowned with years he nobly shall expire,
> To meet the bright award that waits his fame,
> Another shall to all his worth aspire
> My darling charge, and George the Fourth his name."

The debts remained the real trouble, and one of the Prince's tradesmen left his grievances in a print, which assumed the complexion of a libel. His jeweller, Mr. Jeffreys, reviewed the Prince's conduct in this pamphlet, somewhat challenging to Mrs. Fitzherbert, to whom he gallantly sent a copy with a large coronet upon the seal to ensure personal perusal and pain. He had benefited enormously from the Prince's custom, and his bill was eventually settled with a ten-per-cent. reduction by the Commissioners appointed to clear the Prince's debts, both the just and the unjust. But there were other grievances. The Prince had once called Jeffreys to prevent a demand for £1,600 being forced on Mrs. Fitzherbert, which the creditor had declined to put to the Prince's account "on the ground that Mrs. Fitzherbert, being a woman of no rank or consideration in the eye of the law, was amenable to an immediate process." Mr. Jeffreys had smilingly presented the smiling Prince with a receipt for the sum the next morning. It was repaid in three months, and the Prince had brought Mrs. Fitzherbert to return thanks with "mortified pride visible in her countenance." Mr. Jeffreys was a social climber, and profited from the extravagant patronage of the Prince to become

Member for Coventry, whither the Prince afterwards insisted on referring him, for, though Mr. Jeffreys followed fashion to Brighton, he found that he not only excited "no feeling of kindness," but was horrified to see the Prince "with Mrs. Fitzherbert leaning upon his arm pass with looks of scorn!" It appears from other sources that Jeffreys lost the custom of the Prince "owing to the weakness of his head and the volubility of his tongue." But his malicious pamphlet remains to show that Mrs. Fitzherbert could be used as the Achilles-tendon of the Prince.

His love affair, his debts, and his politics became hopelessly entangled, and he was content to drift until the chapter of accidents set him straight. If only he were King! And so thought and prayed his debtors and the Whigs, and possibly Mrs. Fitzherbert, who cherished hopes of a public recognition. The Prince was difficult and impatient. He believed the Tory Ministers made bad blood between him and the King, writing to Lord Keith: "I know very well that they are always glad by way of liberating themselves to throw everything upon the King's shoulders, and, if they really do so, it is wicked in the extreme, as it is their duty always to endeavour to keep up the best understanding, but the fact is that I am always being sacrificed."

The slight monetary relief afforded for the completion of Carlton House and the payment of debt brought a reconciliation between father and son. Gillray portrayed the prodigal returning to Windsor in rags with the Garter hanging from his knee. It was understood that the Prince would reform financially and politically.

The gayest and happiest days of the Prince coincided with the days of French Revolution. Horse-races at Lewes and Newmarket, cricket-matches at Brighton delighted him in the open air. Sussex cricket almost dates from the Pavilion lawn and the Prince umpiring a dispute between Sheridan and the Duke of York. Princely patronage elevated racing and cricket to national institutions. The Prince loved and esteemed horses as dearly as women, and probably there was

no gentleman in England more expert in appreciation of the two most beautiful of creatures. He hunted from Crichel in Dorset and in Hampshire for a year, but his weight told against him. He was genuinely fond of horses. A tale is recorded that, when Dibdin sang the pathetic ballad about "the high-mettled racer," the Prince told the company present that he had once rescued a half-blind old racehorse from the slavery of the shafts. *Solve senescentem equum.* There was no protection of animals in the eighteenth century, and it is curious to record the names of three who were then sensitive to the sufferings of animals, Erskine, Beau Brummell, and the Prince of Wales.

The Prince enjoyed a brilliant career on the Turf, winning the Derby of 1788 with Sir Thomas and some 185 races before 1791, when he suffered unparalleled disaster for a Prince. The running of his horse Escape was challenged at Newmarket, and the heir to the throne was warned off the Turf. The waste-paper heaps of the British Museum contain a note of the Prince written in his Derby year: "Layton, you will deliver Soldier to any one of the Duke of York's lads H.R.H. choses to send for him. Newmarket (October 16, 1788)." The slip drifts down the centuries, when so much of precious documentation has been destroyed. The Prince's "rider for life," Sam Chifney, according to the D.N.B., "was called up before the Jockey Club when nothing was proved against him." But, of course, Cæsar's jockey is expected to ride above suspicion. The evidence showed that the jockey was probably at fault, but the Prince characteristically stood by and pensioned him. The Prince thought he had been ill-treated, and possibly suffered treachery from one of his own suite. He never re-appeared at Newmarket. It was the Ascot meeting which he made royal unto all time. Chifney defended himself afterwards in a pamphlet called *Genius Genuine*, which sold at the large price of five pounds.

It appears that Escape ran on October 20 and 21, 1791. On the first day Escape was beaten by inferior horses and the second day won. There was an investigation, and Chifney

was accused of pulling on the first day in order to alter the betting on the second. There was even a grotesque report that the Prince had winded his own horse with a bucket of water! After the first race the Prince said to his jockey: "No, I have not lost a stiver. Escape certainly would have won, if you had made strong play with him as I desired you." Chifney told the Stewards that "my motive for waiting with Escape was because I knew he could run very fast." He had told the Prince that he would run better on the second day, as he had opened his pores on the first. When the odds were 5 to 1 against on the second day, the Prince wagered 400 guineas, which was a bagatelle to one who owed a quarter of a million. At the same time he chaffed Chifney that he was a better jockey himself, which Chifney "thought meant forgiveness for my riding contrary to orders." The orders were repeated, the Prince adding "God bless you!" In the race "Skylark chose to make play, and I waited with Escape and Escape won." It appears that Chifney, under the euphemism of "waiting," pulled his horse both when he won and when he lost, which was fair tactics with a horse considered the best on the Turf. But the Stewards said that no gentleman in future would run his horses against the Prince.

Life at Brighton became a Carnival tempered by Mrs. Fitzherbert, who induced better company and kept rowdy associations in check. The penurious King and his unlovely Queen had failed to gather the Arts and the Graces of the country to Court. The Prince entertained painters and dramatists as well as bucks and beaux. Votaries of Chance and men of State, men of intellect and women of beauty, met in the Pavilion, which, if it astonished the nation, delighted Society. The Wits and Beauties of England felt no temptation to enrich the pleasure resorts of the Continent, when Brighton offered a mixture of Versailles and Liberty Hall. The Prince mingled type and antitype. Even Warren Hastings was confronted by his arch-critic Sheridan, perhaps not a very well-chosen meeting, for the Great Mogul turned the coldest shoulder to the warm apologies of the deliverer of the great Begum speech.

Such was Brighton in her great days before the Pavilion became a peep-show. A great deal of tideway has flowed under the piers since the papers announced that the presence of the Prince had "frightened away a number of old maids" from visiting the sea. In a Golden Age the Prince ruled gilded youth. In the midst of revelry one night an ominous message reached the Prince from Windsor. The King was going mad!

The Prince immediately and impetuously posted to Windsor, where he joined his brother of York in paying every care and attention to the unhappy monarch, though he was accused of making an unfeeling exhibition of the King's condition. The King had begun to dictate extensive commentaries on the Bible to his pages, and declined to see the Prince. When he did, he flew at his throat, convinced that the Duke of York was his friend and the Prince his enemy. It was not that the loss of the American Colonies had left Yorktown written on his heart, but that the Prince's conduct had affected his head. Yet the Prince had not been unfilial. After Margaret Nicholson's attempt on the King, he posted all night from Brighton to Windsor, where the King refused to receive him. The King's vagaries did not cease. He appears to have shaken hands with an oak tree in Windsor Park, and there were more serious reasons for believing him incapable of continuing his reign.

An immediate struggle for the Regency was declared between the Queen supported by Pitt, and the Prince, supported by his brothers. Courier after courier was despatched in search of Fox, who had disappeared on the Continent to find consolation in his young mistress and the study of the Old Masters. Once informed, he returned from Bologna in nine days, leaving his baggage, including Mrs. Armistead, behind. The Prince began weaving shadow Cabinets with Fox as Premier, Erskine as Attorney-General, Sheridan and Jack Payne at the Admiralty, the Duke of York at the Horse Guards. The old Duke of Cumberland was to receive the Garter which he had forfeited, it may be said, for that of his Duchess. It was also understood that the Princesses would be allowed to marry fine young

English noblemen, for the Prince was as considerate of his sisters as of his brothers. Little was known of those unhappy vestals, except that "Princess Royal is the finest, Princess Augusta the prettiest, and the Princess Elizabeth the handsomest."

The struggle became classical in the Commons. Pitt's Restrictions to the Prince's Regency showed that he thought a strait-waistcoat more necessary for the Prince than the King. The Prince described the Restrictions as "such as no dictator could possibly even have been barefaced enough to have brought forward." With the help of Burke, the Prince replied to Pitt in one of the ablest State-papers ever composed in English.

Pitt held his ground, though attacked by Erskine stupidly and grossly at the Prince's instigation, and (what must have hurt him more) though he was informed maliciously that the King was leaking State secrets. Burke assailed him as the Prince's competitor for power, and Sheridan threatened that the Prince would assert his rights. Fox and Sheridan asserted the divine right of Princes, while the Tories discouraged the royal privilege. Pitt saw his chance of "unwhigging" Fox and restricting the Prince, though his royal brothers made furious fraternal protest in the Lords. Burke and Fox made the mistake of orators in prolonging the debates, when the Prince was actually within a few days of taking possession of the Government and of the person of the King, and, what was equally important, the issue of the doctor's bulletins, for under the care of Tory quacks the King temporarily recovered. The Chancellor Thurlow, who had tearfully mounted the hedge with a view to being continued in the Whig Cabinet, now tearfully begged God to forget him if he forgot his King, which Burke said was the best thing God could ever do for him.

Those were days when politicians became doctors, and doctors became politicians. The struggle between the rival practitioners was as intense as between parties. The Tories, being in power, insisted that the King could recover. The Whigs, being out, feelingly played "the lunatic" instead of the King at cards. The representative of the Prince in the royal

asylum was Dr. Warren, who had attended Lord North, who was said to have paid the bill by making Warren's brother a Bishop. Dr. Warren almost crazed the Tories by announcing that the King was incurable. However, the celebrated Dr. Willis, "a clergyman used to the care of madmen," was introduced in an hour of political fate. He "made an ingenious distinction between insanity and delirium" and promised a cure. To be on the safe side of eventualities, he told Pitt that "the King might never recover, or, on the other hand, he might recover at any moment." It was on a doctor's hint that Chancellor Thurlow hurriedly "quitted the Carlton House party." The state of politics was at the mercy of the King's health. There had been considerable desertion from the mad King to the wild Prince, from the sinking ship at Windsor to the lively pinnace launching at Brighton. Lord Sydney wrote to old Cornwallis in India: "No scruple has been made of declaring that a general sweep of all plans would be made, if the Regency were to last only a day. The ladies are as usual at the head of all animosity. They have driven old Queensberry out of England by calling him a rat." Suddenly the dream of the Regency vanished. A quarter of a century later Brougham said that the Whigs had been under a curse, without specifying the curse. It seemed as though the Prince was destined to be the Whigs' tragedy. He was the candle by which they were constantly lured to their empty doom, while remaining unsnuffed himself. In this case Dr. Willis baffled Dr. Warren, and it was triumphantly announced that the King was well. That night Dr. Willis sat between Pitt and the Duchess of Gordon at supper. In the eyes of the Tories he had saved his country (February 23, 1789). The Whigs were unwigged!

By a stroke of irony next day arrived the deputation of the Irish Commons, offering the Prince the Irish Regency without any restrictions at all. Brougham attributed this to the fact that Irishmen, "although dwelling further from the rising sun, are more given to its worship" than the English. It was an historical pity that the Prince, who had enjoyed

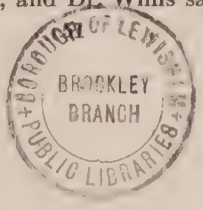
the society of so many boon companions and ladies connected with Ireland, could not have then transferred the Pavilion to Dublin, whose streets were thronged with bucks and beaux, with orators and writers. The amusing though corrupt assembly of Irish gentlemen in Parliament had attained a legendary height of harum-scarum and glory. Upon the organ of a Dublin Church Handel had played the score of *The Messiah*. Dublin was more European than London.

The Regency had become a signal for fierce faction-fightings in the Irish Parliament, English versus Irish, led by the mighty protagonists of Patriotism and Ascendancy, Grattan and Fitzgibbon. The Patriots took up the Prince, asserting independence by demanding his autocracy. Buckingham, the Lord Lieutenant, complained that Fitzgibbon was overwhelmed by a violence not to be conceived. Buckingham was prepared to resign the moment the Prince threw Pitt out, and Grattan was already assuming the rôle of Minister. The Patriots expressed themselves consoled that the King's calamity had not occurred "until the virtues of Your Royal Highness have been matured." Buckingham refused to transmit the Address, which was taken to England by deputation. Buckingham spent some uncomfortable minutes on hearing that "letters are written by the Irish Ambassadors and even by the Prince of Wales, stating that the King is very ill-pleased with me, that the King has promised Lord Thurlow, who has spoken to him from the Prince of Wales, that I shall be recalled." But the King recovered, and the Lord Lieutenant had the pleasure of hearing that the Irish Embassy arrived one day after the fair! The Prince had stirred Scotland as well, and Dundas gave, as a reason for not resigning, his fear lest the Prince should rally the great magnates of Opposition.

With the King's recovery the dreams of English Whigs and Irish Patriots broke. Gillray portrayed the funeral of the Regency carried to burial in a dice-crowned coffin by six Irish Bulls, with Mrs. Fitzherbert as chief mourner. One item in the Regency restrictions seemed to aim at her. It provided

that "the Regent shall not marry a Papist," which really was closing the door on an empty stable.

The King's insanity seemed to affect his whole family, for they broke into violent feuds. The Prince had not shown himself heartless to the King, but he had taken steps to secure the State. Lord Sydney had written to old Cornwallis that "the Prince has got complete possession of the Duke of York, and they had meditated such changes in the State and in the Army. . . ." The Queen's hatred of the Prince and the Duke of York knew no bounds, and after Colonel Lennox fought York in a duel, the Queen at a Ball "received Mr. Lennox very graciously, kissed her fan to him two or three times." The Duke had very coolly suffered the singeing of a curl, and declined to return the fire. The Prince, finding himself opposite Lennox at the Ball, stopped dead. The Queen inquired if he found it too hot, and he replied that in such company it was. The Ball was broken up, but the Prince with the coolness of perfect manners made apology to the lady with Lennox. And to complete the gallantries the sister of Lennox besought the royal curl which had been singed. The Princes conveyed a long and respectful complaint to the King against the Queen. And well they might, for the Court was venomously set against them, and recklessly they turned to gambling and the fastest and most fantastic company in the land. There was nothing to be done but to await the final relapse of the King, who continued to reign to the warping of the Prince's character and not wholly to the benefit of his kingdom. Rumours of further insanity filtered from Windsor through the dull sands of ceremony. The King's insanity carried a grain of ironic sense. He used to say that the Prince was dead, and that women could now be honest. He asked Willis why as a cleric he practised Physic. Willis answered that Our Lord did. The King replied that Our Lord had not £600 a year. The prayers of the Royal Chaplain were interrupted on one occasion with cries of Tally Ho! and 'Ware Fox! which was possibly more a political than a sporting reminiscence. "Anyhow the King laughed, and all present laughed, and Dr. Willis said the prayers had



done His Majesty a vast deal of good." The Courtiers all pretended it had been nothing, and that they had been mad themselves.

The Princes avenged themselves by a recklessness of living, which was as much provoked by their stupid parents as by their cunning companions. Let none call them mean or ungenerous. They raised and lost thousands. They were reduced to offering ten thousand pounds and an Irish Peerage on the death of the King for half that amount in cash. A curious scheme was also launched on the joint security of the Duchy of Cornwall and the Bishopric of Osnaburgh. About three million guelders were raised in Holland, and many of the bonds were afterwards produced by French exiles to England. On receipt of their claims the British Government economically removed them from the country by virtue of an Aliens Act. Some fell to the wolves of the Revolution, and were conveniently guillotined by their fellow-countrymen on the antiquarian quibble that they had bought bonds which recognised George the Third as King of France. The truth is impossible to locate, but there is enough to blot the Prince's escutcheon. A more ancient creditor of the Prince escaped from the Revolution, "Egality" Orleans, and the Prince, resenting his lack of loyalty to the unhappy Louis XVI., cold-shouldered him, and had his name removed from the roll of a London Club by the egalitarian hands of a waiter.

So the best years of life slipped away, and the Prince wrote regretfully to old Cornwallis in India, while commending the son of a money-lender, " what a chequered scene of life I have been obliged to go through for the last six months." It was the old story of a Prince and heir-apparent spoiling for the throne. And he had much to spoil. But Carlton House he did not spoil. According to Walpole in 1785: " It will be the most perfect in Europe. There is an august simplicity. You cannot call it magnificent. It is the taste and propriety that strike. How sick one shall be after this chaste palace of Mr. Adam's gingerbread !"

# LADY JERSEY

The idyll of Mrs. Fitzherbert lasted until 1794, when two enemies of that lady entered the life of the Prince—Lady Jersey and Beau Brummell. Both fascinated his eager eye. Brummell was the ancestor of all æsthetes and the father of fops. Men of letters or fashion have often become famous by imitating him at a distance. Dandies were made by their tailors, but Brummell made his tailor. He changed England. He introduced white tops to hunting boots and starched neckcloths. His taste was legendary. He was said to have jilted a woman who ate cabbage. He insisted on gentlemen drinking port instead of porter with their cheese. George Meredith in *Evan Harrington* distinguishes master and pupil—"George, for instance, possessed a port: Beau Brummell wielded a Presence."

The Prince was not born with consistency in his temperament, and there were already signs of two important changes in his mind. Only time and occasion were wanting for him to break with the Whigs and with Mrs. Fitzherbert, the two points upon which he has been most severely attacked. The Whigs had already broken with themselves. The French Revolution had caused division between Burke and Fox, between the sententious Liberals and the red Radicals of the Party. Now the Prince could be sententious, but never red. As for Mrs. Fitzherbert, his heart had begun, if not to break, at least to chip under the dark eyes of the beautiful Miss Twysden, daughter of an Irish Bishop and wife of Lord Jersey. Lady Jersey had reached the dangerous age of grandmotherhood, when a woman no longer feels the necessity of setting her children a good example, and Time's relentless warnings make a lover's approach as sweet as the last rose of summer. Gossip, letters, and memoirs of the period, uniformly kind to Mrs. Fitzherbert, seldom spare Lady Jersey. Lady Jersey is never given credit for aught but vixenish and villainous conduct. As soon as she began to attract the Prince with an entirely opposite armoury to that of Mrs. Fitzherbert, she received the encouragement of the Queen. The Prince could fall in and out

of love like summer lightning. Lady Jersey was to prove an immediate but intermittent lightning conductor. Unlike Mrs. Fitzherbert she could throw herself at the Prince with all the attraction which passionate abandonment adds to a lady of quality. The Prince was electrified, and Mrs. Fitzherbert received an unsigned note one fine morning from Brighton (June 23, 1794) beginning: "My dearest Love, I have just received a letter from my sister by the Coach this evening desiring me to come to Windsor which . . . I mean to comply with, and to set out to-morrow morning early, having put off my dinner and all my company to Friday. I therefore mean to pass Wednesday in London and return here on Thursday. . . . Adieu, my dear Love, excuse haste."

Mrs. Fitzherbert thought nothing of the note at the moment, but the Prince used his brief passage through town to make an alteration in his affections, of which Mrs. Fitzherbert received word while dining with the Duke of Clarence. She made no reply, but added a surviving postscript to the Prince's letter: "This letter I recd the morg. of the day the P. sent me word he wld never enter my house. L. Jersey." The answer of silent contempt was not what the Prince expected. It even acted as an invisible lever, and Lady Jersey became the one supplanter whom Mrs. Fitzherbert was destined to supplant in turn.

Lady Stafford wrote in the *Jerningham Letters* (July 18, 1794): "I understand that the misunderstanding between the Prince and Mrs. Fitzherbert is made up. The story is too long to write, but after he had been persuaded by a certain lady to give her up and to write according to the idea to Mrs. Fitzherbert, he found he could not live without her, and sent messengers of peace in numbers. But Mrs. Fitzherbert was for some days sturdy. She could not believe that he could continue to love her when for months he had given his time to another, and had behaved to her with the greatest cruelty. But they are friends now, and the mischief-maker is left to find out another, or to go on with you know who." In the same month Lord Mornington reported from Brighton: "I heard

from no less authority than Tom the Third that a treaty of separation and provision is in fact, if not already, concluded between H.R.H. and the late Princess Fitz." The world rang with rumours, and the motes gathered into Mrs. Fitzherbert's beaming eyes. She was beginning to realise the disadvantages both of a wife and a mistress without the advantages of either. The Duke of York, her best friend, had married chiefly at the Prince's desire to continue the succession, which the husband of Mrs. Fitzherbert was desirous to waive. Unfortunately the Duchess declined to treat Mrs. Fitzherbert as a sister-in-law. Colonel St. Leger reported to the courtier Lord Malmesbury that Mrs. Fitzherbert was " the cause of the coolness between the two brothers." Incidentally he confirmed the financial ruin of the Prince. Financial pressure often leads to marriage among Commoners. Royalty are seldom dragged to the altar of Mammon, but the King declined to assuage the Prince's debts unless he married, a condition which, as could not be explained, was already filled. There was another reason for the King's eagerness. The Duchess of York had proved childless, to the disappointment of the Prince. Destiny was hemming him relentlessly into a corner, and he allowed a dynastic marriage to be considered. When people asked who was to be the fortunate object of his affections, reply was made—the victim of his necessities!

The King gleefully reported the Prince to Pitt as fancying " a more creditable line of life " than living with Mrs. Fitzherbert. Like Gibbon, the Prince " sighed as a lover, but obeyed as a son." In return for his obedience he was allowed to choose between the King's niece and the Queen's. The Prince rejected the Queen's niece Louise on the ground that " one of that family is enough." It was a pity, for Louise became the beautiful and high-souled Queen of Prussia who faced Napoleon. The Duke of York unfortunately recommended the King's niece Caroline of Brunswick, whom he had met on his disastrous campaigns. The most romantic of Princes was partly driven by ill-luck and partly by bad advice to wed one of those German Fraus, of whom he and his brothers

stood in congenital terror. Caroline of Brunswick was the most unsuitable bride possible for the Prince, and for that reason Lady Jersey influenced him to marry her, hoping that her own charms would not be displaced. It was all to end disastrously to Prince and Princess, and to Lady Jersey herself. Married harmony can survive if the wife chooses the mistress, but it never begins if the mistress is allowed to choose the wife.

Lady Jersey continued to captivate the Prince, while the discreet Lord Malmesbury was despatched to cage the bride, whom he promptly warned that the death of love lay in the homely underwear and the stockings he observed being knitted in the Duchess's circle. He also informed her delicately that flirtations on the part of a "Companion of the King's son" entailed statutable death upon her lover and herself. In view of the future he could hardly have given her more necessary advice, and he mentioned other points on which Time offers ironical comment, begging her to have no familiar confidants, and telling her "that the sentiment of being loved by the people is a mistaken one." He added that her lady-in-waiting would be Lady Jersey—"to be her mistress' mistress, the Queen's Queen."

Owing to the war which England was waging against France in the defence of Antwerp, the convoying of the Princess took three months and the impatient Prince directed that "she should be in a manner smuggled over into this country" under cover of the transports which were collecting the remains of the unfortunate British army. Lord Malmesbury found her more indelicate and awkward than ever. He had been already shocked, when she sent him a freshly drawn tooth by a page, but in the battle of the toilet he could note his triumph in that "the Princess comes out next day well washed all over." Unfortunately "she piques herself on dressing quick," which was not likely to please the pupil of Beau Brummell. In her character he summarised truly enough: "Some natural but no acquired morality; warm feelings and nothing to counterbalance them; great good humour and much good nature;

no appearance of caprice, rather quick and *vive*, but not a grain of rancour. From her habits, from the life she was allowed and even compelled to live, forced to dissemble." This was at least a point she shared with the Prince, if apparently nothing else.

Forty years later her advocate, Lord Brougham, described her character after it had passed through fire: "Her nature was absolutely without malice or revenge; she hardly knew the merit of forgiveness of injuries, because it cost her nothing, and a harsh expression, a slanderous expression, any indication of hatred or spite never broke from her, even when the resources of ingenuity were exhausted in order to goad her feelings and self-defence almost made anger and resentment a duty."

The Prince's favourites surrounded her from the first. Jack Payne was in command of the ship in which she sailed. Beau Brummell was in the escort which received her at Greenwich, where Lady Jersey was waiting to deck the captive with a white gown and a turban cap. The appointment of the Prince's mistress to be the Princess's Lady-in-waiting is charitably laid to the spirit of economy in which the Prince entered his new state. The Princess was soon aware of the relations between her lady and her Lord, for she not only confided to Lady Jersey a love affair of her own, but, by way of entering into the customs of her new country, she chaffed the Prince at dinner on his apparent affections for Lady Jersey, which sealed her doom with both. Nor was she more tactful when she compared the Prince to a "sergeant-major with his ears powdered." The Prince himself made no comment, but after disengaging himself from the first embrace, he sent Lord Malmesbury for the brandy. Poor Princess! perhaps she never hoped for success. She had already been the shuttlecock between her father's mistress and her mother. She had seen Love's vengeance upon the loveless marriages of royalty. But she entered hers with the two best intentions possible, to learn English fluently and to make her husband happy. In both she failed grotesquely. Her broken English echoes in the *Diary* afterwards written by Lady Charlotte Bury, her Lady-in-

waiting, to whom she confided: "I was the victim of Mammon. The Prince of Wales' debts must be paid, and poor little I's person was the pretence, but oh *mein Gott!* I could be the slave of the man I love." Could she have ever hoped for love? "Married love never lasts," she continued, "dat is not in de nature."

However, the nation were delighted, and Gillray portrayed a cherubic Prince dreaming of a beautiful Princess, while his royal father produced a bag labelled £150,000 *per annum*, and his mother exhibited a treatise on the "art of getting pretty children," and in the darkness of the background such elements as Fox, dice, Chifney, horses and Mrs. Fitzherbert were scattered by the radiant torch of Hymen.

The Prince married Caroline three days after arrival, he looking "like death" and she "like the spectator of her own fate" (April 8, 1795). She showed herself insensitive then and afterwards, when she raised the veil of the wedding night, and revealed the groom in the arms of Bacchus. On the other hand, Lady Jersey had feelingly added some Epsom Salts to the supper of the bride.

By his marriage the Prince paid the price of his debts, though they were not treated too kindly in the Commons. The Evangelical Conscience, as represented by Wilberforce and "the great fermentator" or first brewer in the land, Whitbread, moved the reduction of the grant. The grant was alluded to as "an unpleasant task," and the well-meaning Clarence blurted to the Lords that payment had been stipulated "in the event of the union." Altogether the Princess might consider herself greatly more insulted than Mrs. Fitzherbert had ever been. For the time that unhappy woman faints or fades into the background. It was said the Prince rode past her house the day before the wedding as though in dumb sign of agony, but she had made no sign. What the lovers suffered in each other during those days can never be known, though both found relief in different forms of unconsciousness. Mrs. Fitzherbert could not believe the marriage would take place, and collapsed on hearing the news. The Prince could only

endure his bridal night in a state of liquor. The Royal Marriage Act was beginning to work its curse. Caroline took refuge in the supernatural—" as a drowning wretch catches at a straw I caught at this Crown and Sceptre, but if I had not been miraculously supported I could not have outlived all I had." The Prince was deprived of the presence of his best friend, Sheridan, who with courtly instinct married five days before the Prince, and in the following year received a boy eleven days after the birth of the daughter born to the Prince, whereupon the papers were able to announce that " Mr. Sheridan has lost his wager with the Prince as to time, but won it as to sex." On this occasion the Prince was not entirely indifferent as a husband. The *Colchester Diary* gives him credit for being " much agitated during the Princess's labour, which was long and difficult."

The Princess of Wales bore the Princess Charlotte in succession to the Throne (January 7, 1796). The importance of the new-comer required the presence of the Primate and of Lord Chancellor Thurlow, who was especially invited by the Prince. Lord Jersey was present presumably in Lady Jersey's interests. The Prince had shown more agitation than the Princess, for the King wrote to him furiously because he removed her twice in the week before her accouchement, and " precipitately hurrying the Princess from Hampton Court in a condition not to be named." In consequence " it is my pleasure that you leave St. James's with all your family when it can be done without inconvenience to the Princess." The little Charlotte was already destined to be a battle-gage between her parents, between King and Prince, and between rival swains until the fatal day when she was challenged by Death the first time that she ventured to open the gates of Life to another.

The Princess was restored to health and placed in company selected by the Queen and Lady Jersey, whose hand the Prince " publicly squeezed " in February. The company did not include the Prince, who shortly and charitably gave her notice that he would not call upon her to become a mother again, even " in the event of an accident " to the Princess Charlotte

(April 30, 1796). "Our inclinations," he wrote, "are not in our power, nor should either of us be held answerable to the other, because nature has not made us suitable to each other." He trusted that "the rest of our lives will be passed in uninterrupted tranquillity," rather optimistically perhaps.

The Princess would have been wise to retire, but she still hoped for reconciliation, and pressed for the dismissal of Lady Jersey, with whom she refused to dine in the Prince's absence.

When she saw her husband drain Lady Jersey's glass she snatched and puffed his minion George Hanger's pipe. With the consummation of his marriage the Prince considered duty done and himself free to revive romance for Lady Jersey, who remained in high favour with the Queen because of the Queen's cordial dislike for the Princess. The King was warm but the Prince was chill, and the Princess was fighting a lost battle. She returned the Queen's rudeness, but wrote home an indiscreet account of the Queen, which for safety she entrusted to a clergyman, who returned the letter in a packet addressed to Lady Jersey! What followed was equally disagreeable for the clergyman, for the Princess, for the Queen, and apparently for Lady Jersey, whose obliging husband wrote a public vindication, stating that he "joined the more anxiously in this repeated inquiry—to find out to whom it could be an interest to pry into and intercept the letters; an object which I shall never leave uninvestigated." It was obvious that his Lordship had never investigated Lady Jersey. Lady Stafford wrote to Lord Granville (June 29, 1796): "The King wrote a very kind letter to the Princess, and desired her to write to the Prince. She wrote one of the prettiest letters you ever saw, to which he had a most formal cold stupid answer to say that he should be at Carlton House in the course of Monday. His behaviour was like his letter, insomuch so that had he behaved so to any other lady, the husband must have thought that he meant to let her know he never desired to see her again. As soon as dinner was over he went to Lady Jersey. He protests he will never go to the Opera with the Princess, and is entirely

directed by Lady Jersey. This is called reconciliation." It was officially called a marriage! And again: "I hear Lord Uxbridge will not allow Lady Uxbridge to be at her granddaughter's christening if Lady Jersey comes to it. They say her Ladyship is to be at the drawing-room to-day. I hope the mob will attack her."

This uncharitable wish was apparently fulfilled, for Mrs. Calvert, "an Irish Beauty of the Regency," noted that, "Lady Jersey became very unpopular with the mob, and one evening as I was going through Covent Garden in my chariot I was taken for her, and my carriage and servants were well pelted with mud."

The affair of the intercepted letters was a little too flagrant, and Lady Jersey wrote to the Princess that she was compelled "to resign into his hands the situation to which I had the honour of being appointed by him," although the Prince "represented that such a step could only be regarded as a confirmation of every absurd and abominable falsehood." No lady seems to have caused so much dislike over so long a period as Lady Jersey, for as early as 1776 the *Morning Post*, in awarding marks for the "Toasts" of the day, gave her 11 for Beauty and Grace, 12 for Expression, but for Principles zero! In the same competition the Duchess of Gordon scored 12 for Beauty and 3 for Principles, but twenty years later, when the Duchess gave a party at her house and "Lady Jersey came, the ladies made a lane and let her pass unspoken to." The *Jerningham Letters* recorded (July 2, 1796): "Lady Jersey has given in her resignation; she has taken a house at Brighton for the summer. The poor Princess has little cause to expect pleasure or content during her stay at that place."

Mrs. Fitzherbert had withdrawn from Brighton, but the place recalled to the Prince the absent souvenir, which is often more torturing than the present tantalisation. Towards Mrs. Fitzherbert remorse had prompted a mild generosity, for he offered her £3,000 a year, which the King, who had now some shrewd suspicions, promised to continue in event of the Prince's death. Mr. Errington insisted on her accepting the

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honourable alimony. So Mrs. Fitzherbert merely withdrew and left the Prince to Lady Jersey, who cost him terribly. She had advised him to marry an unattractive, flighty, obstinate and ludicrous wife, and was hoist with her own petard. For the inevitable reaction threw the Prince back to Mrs. Fitzherbert, who now kept him at a distance. In her relief at seeing the fall of Lady Jersey, the Princess " hoped her husband would not feel her any impediment to the reconciliation he was so desirous for " with Mrs. Fitzherbert. He felt her not the least impediment at all. It was interesting that the Princess and her great advocate Brougham felt admiringly towards Mrs. Fitzherbert. He wrote that the Prince's " passion for this excellent person was a redeeming virtue of the Prince; it could only proceed from a fund of natural sense and good taste, which, could it by any miracle have been well managed in a palace, must have furnished out a ruler, before whose lustre the fame of Titus and the Antonines would grow pale." But Brougham's thumb-nail sketches were drawn as though the orator were rocking the Lords !

As soon as Lady Jersey had exhausted the Prince, he decided to drop her gently. He sent his friend Edward Jerningham to prevail upon her to notice the royal " difference or diminution of regard," which she seemed very unwilling to do. Public occasion soon showed truth to Jerningham's epigram that " Lady Jersey is now in the Transit of Venus." Looking ahead to the reunion which the Prince effected with Mrs. Fitzherbert, in 1800, we find Lady Jersey making a last desperate effort to recall her lover at a breakfast given by the Duchess of Devonshire. Lady Jerningham, a Catholic and supporter of Mrs. Fitzherbert, noticed " Lady Jersey coasting round the spot where he stood with her daughters. The Prince was quite annoyed with her and eyed her askance; but she is resolved to plague him; she professes it to be her resolution." In 1803 Lady Jersey told Hoppner that she apologised to the Prince on the stairs, and that next day Colonel McMahon called to say " that it was the desire of the Prince that she should not speak to him. She says there is a Popish combination against her."

In other words, the Prince was in love again with Mrs. Fitzherbert, whom, in Coventry Patmore's words,

> "Strange Fate mocks
> With a wife's duty, but no wife's sweet right."

Mrs. Fitzherbert had played her cards perfectly. Walpole had written: "Nor do I believe that Mrs. Fitzherbert will forbid the banns, for she has taken Marble Hill and proposes to live very platonically"; and Miss Berry recorded that she was "driving away sorrow in a phaeton and four" at Margate, whither a same desertion was to send Lady Jersey. Times had passed since the Prince dismissed a Secretary for lecturing Lady Jersey "on her want of reverence for the legal Princess." That Lady Jersey did not die of a broken heart appears from many Memoirs. Sarah Lady Lyttelton described her in 1800 as "sixty years old, still very beautiful, very full of affectation, and nothing can persuade her that she is more than thirty." Lady Bessborough wrote (September 21, 1802): "Lady Jersey was at Margate, where she has made a new conquest and a most violent one, John Ponsonby. And as Lady Jersey's system always is having no happiness without a rival to trouble and torment, she has the pleasure of knowing that poor Lady Conyngham is expecting John every day at Spa." This affair ended, if not happily, rather surprisingly to Lady Jersey, for Ponsonby married her own daughter, and Lady Conyngham became the last-loved favourite of the Prince. The D.N.B. charitably suggests that Lady Jersey's relations with the Prince have been investigated with industry rather than accuracy. It may be so.

# MRS. FITZHERBERT AGAIN

The *Morning Post* recorded in 1798 that "Mrs. Fitzherbert looks more elegant than ever. One can indeed hardly help exclaiming with the army of Mahomet when he showed them his Irene, such a woman is worth a kingdom!" This was certainly the view of the Prince, and he made serious efforts to recover her. But she was not easily rewon, though the Prince was a desperate lover, and simply threatened to proclaim their secret marriage if she would not renew their public liaison. Mrs. Fitzherbert thought it was time to send her Confessor to Rome to sound her position, and inquire if she had the right to live with the Prince of Wales, a Princess of Wales notwithstanding. The Holy See had not studied the matrimonial state of an English Prince since the affairs of Henry the Eighth and Catharine of Aragon. The canonical result was the same in that the Pope confirmed the bond. Mrs. Fitzherbert was free to consider herself her third husband's first and only wife. Mr. Wilkins mentions a Papal Brief on the subject "under the seal of the Fisherman," but the most patient inquiries at Rome have failed to trace any such document. The Papacy was in exile and during these years such Briefs were not written. Mrs. Fitzherbert's Confessor must have obtained the decree *viva voce*. Certainly the Church was satisfied, for Catholics, according to the *Colchester Diary*, "talk pretty loudly that Mrs. Fitzherbert is the lawful wife, and that the Princess of Wales is not lawfully married. One's blood runs cold at such language." In any case, Mrs. Fitzherbert forgave the Prince and Gainsborough painted a picture of the Reconciliation of the Prince pleading with Mrs. Fitzherbert, who, with averted head, allows Sheridan to shed gentle words upon her wrath.

In June, 1800, Mrs. Fitzherbert gave her own wedding breakfast, better late than never, in order that her friends might meet the Prince as a bridegroom. Eight years of happiness followed, in which they merrily suffered all the ups and downs that political or financial affairs can produce. Both were approaching middle age, and Mrs. Fitzherbert was described

in 1804, by "*an Irish Beauty of the Regency*," as "about fifty, very fat, but with a charming countenance. Her features are beautiful, except her mouth which is ugly, having a set of not good false teeth." It takes one Beauty to pick another Beauty to pieces. Mrs. Fitzherbert was even simpler to dissect in character. A letter survives showing her naïve desire to see her parents-in-canon-law at the theatre (November 28, 1801): "I had a great curiosity last year to see the King and Queen at the play, a sight I never saw in my life. The night I was fortunate enough to fix upon was when the King was shot at. The horror and fright I had upon the occasion determined me never to go again on a similar occasion" (Hadfield's attempt).

The infatuated pair withdrew, careless of the future, to Brighton, which grew from a village to a town. The Prince's characteristics were not softened during the interminable years of waiting for the Crown which followed. The thwarted dreamer, the shadow statesman, and the blighted husband began to run to seed. Was it entirely his fault? He had been given no clear run for his social and regal talents. Writers of Fiction and History sometimes change rôles, and in the novel *Rodney Stone* Conan Doyle rings truer than Thackeray's indictment. He describes the Prince in the latter Brighton days as follows: "A stranger contradiction of qualities was never gathered under one hat. He is a man, who is always in a hurry and yet never has anything to do. He fusses about things with which he has no concern, and he neglects every obvious duty. He is generous to those who have no claim upon him, but he has ruined his tradesmen by refusing to pay his just debts. He is affectionate to casual acquaintances, but he dislikes his father, loathes his mother, and is not on speaking terms with his wife. He claims to be the first gentleman of England, but the gentlemen of England have responded by black-balling his friends at their clubs, and by warning him off from Newmarket under suspicion of having tampered with the horses. He spends his days in uttering noble sentiments and contradicting them by ignoble actions."

On the other hand, his tradesmen were fond of sending him

bills which would have ruined him to pay. Among his debts was a farrier's bill for forty thousand pounds, and hundreds of pounds were charged for the perfumed powder he used to dress his hair. It is possible that his sentiments towards his father and mother and wife were reciprocated, and grounded on justification. His feeling to his father was shared by his brethren, and his distaste for his mother by his wife, while nobody had a right to criticise his attitude to the Princess Caroline, who had not suffered wedlock with her.

The King encumbered the way not only of the Prince's efficiency but of the Government's. When the royal mind wavered, the helm of the State wandered no less. At any moment he might be reported out of his wits, and no less regularly pronounced sane. The Tories ruled from the perpetual brink of losing office, and the Whigs evaporated by sheer exhaustion from succeeding. Fox grew old and grey as expectant Premier, and the offices of State had been promised so many times that when the Prince conferred the Receivership of Cornwall "as a trifling proof of friendship" on Sheridan, General Lake's brother immediately produced a trifling grant of the reversion to the same. Sheridan had to wait. Buckingham once wrote amusingly of the Prince: "I sincerely condole with any Ministry he may join with his noisy banditti."

There was a change of Ministers, but only to allow a feeble Tory to succeed a strong one. Pitt had pledged himself to give Catholic Relief to sugar the Irish Union, and resigned when the King developed scruples concerning his Coronation Oath. Before Addington could receive the seals of office, the King was once more insane. The Prince hurried on the scene, but was not allowed to speak to the King except in the presence of Dr. Willis, whose grim optimism and black coat appear and reappear in the Windsor epic. Though Pitt was still firm on Restrictions to the Regency, the Prince applied to him direct, being undecided whether or not to retain the Tory Ministers. But the King suddenly recovered and retained them himself. Pitt was confirmed as pilot in the storm. As for Addington, the Prince required Sheridan's help to reply to a "most im-

pertinent and most insincere letter," as well as to write "a smart reply" to the Chancellor. Sheridan was still a fighting Whig and found himself drifting from Fox, who told the Prince his disapproval of Sheridan's language towards Pitt. Sheridan called Fox "Pitt-bitten," but the Prince was anxious to promote a coalition between Fox and Pitt, partly in the face of the French peril and partly to further his political power. Fox left the Prince to Sheridan, to whom he wrote (January 12, 1803): "I am told that the Prince has heard a rumour that it is intended to associate the Queen and the Duke of York in the Regency with him, and that both he and Mrs. Fitzherbert are alarmed about it to the last degree. I think it worth while for you to see her at least if not him to tranquillise them."

Fox had retained a distant finger of the Prince's political schemes, and heartily concurred in "the propriety he thinks there would have been in waiting for some cause of war in which other nations would have concurred." For a time he only begged the Prince "not to say or do anything that can tend to declare a personal enmity between him and Bonaparte." Fox was a citizen of the planet and shared the spirit of the times which set mankind above his immediate racial kin. Fox now opposed France in the cause of Dutch independence, as he had opposed his own country against the Americans.

The French Revolution divided and decimated the Whig Party. Burke's Reflections militated against Fox's convictions. It was the old story that Revolutionary ideas, which may be bread on the Continent, when applied to England, dissolve into poison. The Whig theory was tenable as long as the Liberal leaders were country gentlemen and Radicals were grandees. The Prince felt the difficulties imposed logically by the French Revolution, and described himself as "a kind of sleeping partner, but a sleeping partner who unluckily had a great deal of the business to do and ultimately much of the risk to run!"

The Prince aimed at Coalition, because he had uses for both Parties. When he found himself opposed by the King, he joined the King's Opposition. In wartime he joined the opposition to the enemies of his country. He must be given

credit for designing the Ministry of all the Talents and of making the approaches to Pitt. He sent Sheridan to Addington and Moira to Pitt. In the *Granville Papers* Lady Bessborough, sister of Georgiana Devonshire, wrote the Prince's words to her son in 1804: "The enmity is on Mr. Pitt's side not mine. He had thought himself ill-used by Mr. Pitt on the Regency question of '89, but that these Ministers were ruining the country by their incapacity; that no party alone was strong enough to do any good, but that a union of all the talents in the country was what he looked to as the only measure. That he did ample justice to those of Mr. Pitt—it cannot be thought very unreasonable that I should expect Mr. Pitt to come to me before I go to him. I am ready to meet him half-way, but surely some little advance on his part is due to me."

The Prince considered 1804 the most critical period of his life, and he seems to have passed nervously from one camp to another. At one moment he commanded Buckingham to town, and at another he carried on "a private flirtation at Brighton" with Addington, who rode from Worthing to meet him on the Downs. The Prince showed the Whigs his eagerness and irritation on the Catholic Question, which he wished to see shelved rather than impede Coalition. The Catholic Question became the anchor of one party and the cancer of the other. In the Prince's mind it was associated with the King's madness and with his own madness for Mrs. Fitzherbert. As he grew older it became more than an irritation. Meantime the Catholic repulse of 1805 in Parliament was depicted by Gillray with all the old insinuations—Mrs. Fitzherbert as "Abbess of Brighton" and Fox as "Cardinal Volpone."

The world's history pivoted on the War which became intermittent between England and France. The French were openly fighting for an illusory and imperial glory, while the English were sensibly defending their commercial credit. The Prince was anxious to serve in any command even under his friend Moira, but the bitter jealousy of the Court lost him any chance of military distinction. He asked for conscription and received proscription. He indulged in a vain-glorious

correspondence with the King and with the Duke of York, upon whose military prowess as Commander-in-Chief the King still set his heart. The Prince was reduced to firing epigrams: "Ought I not to share in the glory of victory when I have everything to lose by defeat?" He complained bitterly that he was left to languish as Colonel with lower rank than his own equerry. He could only wear a General's uniform as a form of fancy dress. From Brighton the Prince endeavoured to alarm the King: "Hanover is lost. England is menaced with invasion. Ireland is in rebellion. Europe is at the foot of France." The King received his rhotodomontades with ironical applause. In the event of an invasion the King gave him leave to meet the invader at the head of his regiment, and his retirement to the Brighton Pavilion was allowed to seem an act of military observation. The Prince in furious earnest published the whole correspondence, and the King went really insane with rage. But the war continued, and at Brighton he received word of Trafalgar. He was deeply affected, and shared Mrs. Fitzherbert's sympathy for Lady Hamilton, writing: "I hope that there is still in this country sufficient honour, virtue, and gratitude to prompt us to ratify and to carry into effect the last dying request of our Nelson."

So far from helping Lady Hamilton, English virtue completely overcame English gratitude. Gillray's caricature of her as Dido Deserted made a pendant to that of the Forsaken Fitzherbert. Trafalgar was followed by Austerlitz, and in the red sun of Austerlitz Pitt sank for ever (January 24, 1806). Before he was dead, the Prince was canvassing the Cambridge vacancy on behalf of Lord Lansdowne. The day after his death the Prince arrived at Lord St. Vincent's, while that naval hero was still dressing, with word to be transmitted to Addington that the King intended to send for Grenville. The Whigs were in at last! Grenville sent for Fox, and Fox sent for the Prince, with whom he discussed the three points of Whiggery. There was the Slave Trade, which Pitt had denounced and extended. There was the question of a French peace, and there was Catholic Relief. The Prince had become lukewarm

on all, and Fox could only make a gesture in the favour of the Whig Creed. The stricken and neglected giant was dying, and only enjoyed a few months of phantom power before he was drawn among the company of phantoms himself. Gillray did not spare him at the last, caricaturing a death-bed at which Mrs. Fitzherbert pressed Absolution and a Bishop, while the Prince proffered a more welcome brimmer of Sack!

Through Grenville the King forbade the Prince to attend the funeral, but even a year later it was recorded by a Diarist that "since the death of Mr. Fox he has worn black clothes only." The Prince wrote to Grey that "having from the earliest period of my life, when I first entered a political career, looked up to no one but Fox, having been constantly and invariably attached to him and to his principles; having trodden that path which he marked out for me; and having been guided through it by the support of his hand, I do candidly acknowledge to you that the difference is so prodigious, the loss so immense, that my thoughts are quite bewildered." The death of Fox evoked the height of affectionate reminiscence, but it marked his steady decline from the Whigs. Grey he hailed as the legatee of Fox, but never called to office as King or Regent.

On the death of the only two statesmen of talent, the Coalition of all the Talents could be formed without fear of rivalry under Grenville. The Prince pressed Moira, Erskine, and Romilly into office as his own friends and allies, but he left them stranded as Whigs. As soon as the Talents were laid with a sound of Corinthian brass rather than of chosen gold upon the political counter, the Prince wrote to Moira that he had determined "on the death of poor Fox to cease to be a party man." Henceforth he chose his politics for the men, and not men for their politics. The fact was that the Whigs had neglected him, and he was set upon showing them that the wrath of a Prince spelt political death. Lord Holland, the great high-priest of Whiggery, records: "Truth compels me to acknowledge that he had some reason to complain of the Ministers," and with the Prince a little reason went a long way. Whigs like Sheridan and Moira stood by the Prince through

thick and thin—Moira, of whom William Cory wrote that "his virtue was beyond the measure of his promotion," and that his friendship was "one of the creditable facts in the Biography of George."

In office the Whigs thought they could do without the Prince. When they suddenly fell, he never replaced them in the sense of restoration. When the Talents resigned on the Catholic Question, Mr. Perceval became Tory Premier with the Prince's acquiescence. Perceval had been a partisan of the Princess of Wales, and the Prince complained: "I thought it rather hard that, while I was doing all I could to keep the King easy and had decided not to oppose his new government, that my peace and honour were to be the first sacrifice to that new administration." The end balanced matters when the Prince abandoned the Whigs and the Tory Premier abandoned the Princess.

It was an era of intense political disappointments. The Whigs and Catholics were kept in a state of constant irritation, though the Prince always held out possibilities to Whigs, if they would shelve the Catholic Question in consideration of the King's health. He went to Stow to make the Grenvilles aware of his wishes. The Grey and Grenville party was to suffer much illusion at his hands, and Grey can hardly have been consoled by the Prince writing with philosophical irony: "This is a strange world we live in, and nothing can be done in it without a little temper and a little policy. We must do the best we can, and because we cannot have everything our own way, we must not therefore instantly throw up the whole game and become the tool of others." Erskine naturally saw in the sudden fall of the Whigs and his loss of the Chancellorship "a national calamity," though he cherished a topaz ring which the Prince had told him to keep till he could engrave it with an Earl's coronet.

Erskine waited for his Earldom as vainly as Warren Hastings for the coronet, with which the Prince would have liked to vindicate his career, as vainly as Lady Hamilton for the redemption of Nelson's dying request, as vainly as Mrs. Fitzherbert

for her public recognition and rehabilitation. Hastings was accused of a hard heart, and Lady Hamilton of an over-soft one, but the ingratitude of England was the meed of both. The Prince had an unfailing instinct for the *beau geste*, without the consistent doggedness to press the claims on which he exercised his generosity of promise. How often he may have repeated to himself, *meliora probo deteriora sequor*. The Prince, however, was tired of the Whigs, and announced that he had moderated his politics to save the King from a relapse. What the affairs of the Prince, his Whiggeries and rogueries, had already done to bring the King into the last state of blindness and lunacy was consummated by the death of the favourite Princess Amelia (November 2, 1810). The Princess had had a love affair with Mr. Fitzroy, though, according to Fitzroy's brother, they were not more than an engaged couple. The Princess of Wales wrote after a visit to her staunch friend the King: "Thank God I do not live with them. Everybody believes Princess Amelia is married to Mr. Fitzroy, and they say she has confessed her marriage to the King, who is miserable at the loss of his daughter." The Royal Marriage Act seemed to be breaking like a wave of bitterness over the head of its originator. The death of the Princess was sudden, for the Prince had dined that night with the Queen, and had given the company an excellent imitation of Grattan. It was a satisfaction to the King that the Prince recovered her jewels from Fitzroy. But he fell into a state from which he never again emerged lucid. With white beard and trembling hand he sometimes played a few chords of Handel, and then even music forsook him. The Regency was at hand.

The political restrictions entailed by Pitt were temporarily accepted, in spite of the protest of the Royal Dukes. They restricted the Regent's fingers from three rather tempting pies—Peers, Pensions and Royal Property. The Whigs remained distractedly expectant. Grey and Grenville waited nervously condescending, while Sheridan and Moira, described as the Prince's Jack-a-lanthorn and Desert Mirage respectively, waited on the Prince day and night. Grey was disturbed hearing the

PUBLIC LIBRARIES + BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM + BROCKLEY BRANCH

PLATE II.—MRS. FITZHERBERT AND THE PRINCE OF WALES, BY COSWAY

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Prince's quixotic intention to send Sheridan to Ireland. Perplexed by division of opinion and graspings for office, the Prince sent for Mrs. Fitzherbert, who advised him to fulfil his promises to the Whigs. He weighed her advice with that given daily by the new favourite, Lady Hertford, and decided to retain the Tories. The Prince had a leaning for women as advisers. He found they were sometimes subtler, if a little unscrupulous in their ideas, but they never betrayed him. "The Irish Beauty of the Regency" described Lady Hertford as "near fifty, has been, and still is, beautiful but on a large scale. I think her without exception the most forbidding, haughty, unpleasant-looking woman I ever saw." Mrs. Fitzherbert found her particularly forbidding. As for the unlucky Whigs, Moira was already starting as Lord Lieutenant to Ireland, when the Prince bade the Tories stay. It was a long and natural development in the Prince's politics, of which there is more than one view. Brougham as a Whig furiously attacked him for discarding "the very men who had stood by him in his domestic broils; whilst he took into full favour his determined enemies." On the other hand, the Prince could claim he had refused to make the ministers of his pleasures the administrators of his Empire. By either view he seemed to act as a statesman. With a gesture of superb irony he received the osculations of his Tory Ministers beneath a bust of Fox, which had not found its way accidentally!

At the prospect of Regency, the Prince had become determined to break with Mrs. Fitzherbert, partly because he had espied her as a terrible weapon in the hands of his enemies, and partly for the growing attractions of Lady Hertford. For a time he made Mrs. Fitzherbert chaperon the new star at the Pavilion, and it was some time before Lady Hertford's position was suspected in the outer world, and that "Peter Pindar" asked:

> "Has Dame Fitzherbert, once your minion,
> Entirely lost your heart's dominion?"

A breaking point appeared imminent for Mrs. Fitzherbert, and she wrote to the Prince: "Whatever may be thought of

me by some individuals, it is well known Your Royal Highness four and twenty years ago placed me in a situation so nearly connected with your own that I have a claim upon you for protection. I feel I owe it to myself not to be insulted under your roof with impunity. The influence you are now under and the conduct of one of your servants, I am sorry to say, has the appearance of your sanction and support, and renders my situation in your house, situated as I am, impossible any longer to submit to." The studied rudenesses of Lady Hertford and Blomfield, an artillery officer, promoted for proficiency on the violoncello to be the Regent's Secretary, almost soured Mrs. Fitzherbert's spirit. But she had had her day, and unlike the Prince's political friends was ready to subside gracefully.

As Regent the Prince delighted that he could command the circumstance of State. He decided to hold Drawing-rooms without the Princess on the precedent of the Second George when a widower. He purchased Rembrandts. He made himself a Field-Marshal. And he gave the Regency Gala, the most wonderful feast London had ever seen, to mark his entry into power. It was compared to the Feast of Belshazzar by Mr. Wilkins, who was present at neither. Incidentally the British Belshazzar received the bouquet of fierce Byronics beginning:

> "Go, dash the roses from thy brow!
> Grey hairs but poorly wreathe with them;
> Youth's garlands misbecome thee now,
> More than thy very diadem."

The splendour and magnificence of the Gala drew a certain popular admiration upon the Regent, though the economically judicious were compelled to grieve. There had been nothing equal since the potations of the Cæsars or the Field of the Cloth of Gold. Once again a King of France was entertained by the Majesty of England, and the Regent's "exquisite courtesy to the exiled royal family of France was the theme of universal admiration." The son of the demented entertained the family of the beheaded. It was noticed that the Regent's two wives stayed at home, the Princess because she was not asked, and

Mrs. Fitzherbert because she was offered a lower place. Mrs. Fitzherbert visited the Regent in advance to know her place, and was told: "Madam, you know that you have none." It was the official severance. She returned home and wrote, with sarcastic dignity: "You, Sir, are not aware, in your anxiety to fill your table with persons only of the highest rank, that, by excluding her who now addresses you merely for want of those titles that others possess, you are excluding the person, who is not unjustly suspected by the world of possessing in silence unassumed and unsustained a rank given her by yourself above that of any other person present. Having never forfeited my title to Your Royal Highness' public as well as private consideration by any act of my life, to what could this etiquette be for the first time imputed? No one, my dear sir, has proved themselves thro' life less solicitous than myself. But I cannot be indifferent to the fair honourable appearance of consideration from you, which I have hitherto possessed, and which I feel I deserve and for which reason I can never submit to appear in your house in any place or situation but in that where you yourself first placed me many years ago."

Mrs. Fitzherbert retired to a little house at Parson's Green, provided by the generosity of friends, where she gave her attention to more perennial flowers than those of love, and was reported to have become a "scientific botanist." Henceforth the Regent rather avoided Brighton, and on one of the rare occasions when they met in London he cut her, a compliment which she later returned.

They only met like untranquil spirits from time to time in that great and envious world, which their love had once been strong enough to defy. But even when the world of the Regency perished with all its gallantry and gala, the ghosts of the lovers continued to haunt the readers and writers of history.

# LADY HERTFORD

Lady Hertford, the Queen of the Regency, entered the Prince's life through a celebrated action at law known as the Seymour Case. Lady Horatia Seymour, sister-in-law of the Hertfords, left her daughter, Minney Seymour, to Mrs. Fitzherbert's adoption. After the death of both parents abroad, the executors of the will decided to remove the child into more Protestant keeping, to the equal anguish of Mrs. Fitzherbert and of Minney, who threw her arms around the Prince and said: "You will fight for me, Prinney." The Prince was very susceptible to children, and entered immoderately into the fray. He offered to give the girl a dowry of ten thousand pounds on condition she was allowed to console Mrs. Fitzherbert, presumably for his own absence. He even canvassed the Lords, when the Case was brought before the House by Romilly as Mrs. Fitzherbert's counsel. In vain counsel exhibited "the peculiar advantage from the patronage and protection of the Prince of Wales," which Mrs. Fitzherbert's home afforded. The executors, whether on grounds religious or moral, were inflexible. There could be no credence that the girl was Mrs. Fitzherbert's daughter, but Lady Horatia had been friendly with the Prince, and the Seymour family were determined to remove her from a patronage, which might be construed into paternity. The Tory, Lord Chancellor Eldon, adjudicated the child to the executors. Fortunately for Mrs. Fitzherbert there was a sudden change of Government, and Erskine, the Whig Solomon, succeeded to the Woolsack, and awarded the child on appeal to Lord Hertford, the head of the Seymour family, and Lord Hertford, through the intervention of Lady Hertford, placed Minney where the Prince rightfully swore was best for her. Mrs. Fitzherbert won the child but lost a husband, who became henceforth attached to Lady Hertford. The caricaturists became a little puzzled where to place the Regent's affection. He was portrayed riding a Hobby Horse with Lady Hertford, and Cruikshank drew him as Captain Macheath in the *Beggar's Opera*, while Mrs. Fitz-

herbert and Lady Hertford, as Polly and Lucy, released him from the chains of the Regency restrictions.

The sympathetic Gillray portrayed Mrs. Fitzherbert and Minney in parody of Mr. Peter's picture of a Guardian Angel conducting a child to heaven. But as the ascension was depicted from the Pavilion, accompanied by rosaries and such Roman toys, the sectarian appeal was obvious. Mrs. Fitzherbert, however, summoned a Protestant Bishop to bring up Minney a strict member of the Faith, of which her protector was now official Head. The Prince always treated Minney as his own child, entitling himself her "father-by-adoption" long years after he had set aside Mrs. Fitzherbert. Difficult as it is to unravel a mind so complicated and tempestuous as that of the Prince, it is possible that, on becoming pro-Defender of the Faith, he felt a religious incompatibility in cherishing a wife of the offending creed. Now the Protestantism of the Georgian era was blatant, boisterous, and blasphemous. Lady Hertford was a strong Protestant, and the Regent followed her.

Minney, however, was always encouraged to correspond with the Regent and give him gossamer scraps of news about Mrs. Fitzherbert. It was to his credit that he could charm as well as be charmed in the presence of children. *Sinite parvulos* was, perhaps, his most Evangelical symptom. Notes of Minney to "Prinney" survive, drifting down the ages: "I have the pleasure of telling you that Mama is much better this evening. Kisses X X X."

"The cake you so kindly sent me was excellent. I had the pleasure of sharing it with my little friends on Twelfth Day, and thank you for making us all so happy."

"I am much obliged to you for your beautiful presents, they are indeed both very pretty, particularly the bracelets, which will fit me when I am an old woman. I put one of the earrings in my ear the minute I received them, and ran down to Mama to show her them; she thought them beautiful, and I shall wear them with great pleasure as being your presents. Mr. and Mrs. Watty arrived here, the day before yesterday, and brought the dear little baby with them; it is such a nice little plump, fat

thing, and chatters away famously, and in that respect it is much like me, I believe if I had nothing else to do, I should be nursing it all day."

The Regent remembered Minney's birthday, even in domestic grief, writing (November 22, 1818): "My beloved Minney, I take up my pen in the midst of the greatest grief and affliction possible (having so recently lost my best, most revered, and most beloved of mothers) to write you a few lines and to assure you that notwithstanding I not only never can forget, but that I do greet with emotions of pleasure and delight that are not to be expressed the anniversary of the day that gave you birth. That it may please a divine Providence constantly to watch over you as the favoured object of its choicest care enduing you with every possible happiness and blessing, which this world can afford, and that you may through a long series of years still to come enjoy many, many, many and repeated returns of this Anniversary; are prayers that never could proceed with more sincerity and fervour from a real and natural parent than they are offered up at the throne of all mercies from the heart of him, who whilst he yet lives, never will cease to be, my dearest child, Your most affectionate Father by adoption. GEORGE P.R."

Minney Seymour remained a link between the ancient lovers, for in 1809 the Prince was corresponding with Mrs. Fitzherbert over "the escape our little angel has had" from a bad governess, whom the Prince frantically implored Mrs. Fitzherbert, "for God's sake let go to the Devil her own way, which she is sure sooner or later to accomplish," and adding, "but after all, my dearest Maria, the best security is that which you have within yourself, for your tender care and watchful eye will secure beyond possibility that her infantine and pure mind as well as her dear and little susceptible heart should never be led astray." The Prince does not seem to have written again to Mrs. Fitzherbert, though she sometimes found it necessary to address him businesslike supplications. In 1813 she asked funds for a wife's support: "From your liberality I hope this: from your justice I claim it. The sad consciousness which at moments you must feel, how cruelly you have used me on points

of far more importance than the present, such recollection will, I trust, teach your heart on this inferior subject at least to do me justice." And again in the following year: "What is due to me is not degrading for me to receive, though painful in the extreme for me to ask. I can add no stronger motive, yet one other my heart leads me to name that under Your Royal Highness' sanction I have made myself responsible for the proper education and maintenance of my beloved child. It is most probably the last time you will be troubled by a letter from me. It is my intention to go soon to the Continent. I have been accused of entering into Cabals against Your Royal Highness and doing you all the mischief in my power. I disdain the charge. The evidences of the contrary are with me, and I thank the Almighty that throughout all my bitter trials I have hitherto had forbearance enough never to utter one syllable that could have affected your interests, made you an enemy or given you any cause of resentment towards me."

To Minney Seymour the Regent did not prove so ungenerous, and in spite of Perceval's sneer as opposing counsel in the Seymour Case that he would be most unlikely ever to pay the promised dowry, he endowed her handsomely on marriage to George Dawson Damer.

Meantime Isabella Seymour reigned far more effectively than Queen Jane Seymour. The caricaturists depicted her as Delilah snipping the royal curls. The Regent had reached the age when a sparkling and frivolous Beauty would have accorded ill with his tastes and figure. He desired beauty to be about him, but tempered with grandmotherly affection. Henceforth he only loved middle-aged women. In 1809 he seemed anxious to embrace Lady Bessborough, who wrote in an amusing and revealing letter, as far as a woman may be trusted with her own recording, how "he has killed me! Such a scene I never went through. I stared and he went on, and after a long tirade threw himself on his knees and clasping me round kissed my neck. Then vows of eternal love, entreaties and promises of what he would do. He would break with Mrs. Fitzherbert and Lady Hertford. I should make my own

terms. I should be sole confidant, sole adviser. I should guide his politics." Though Lady Bessborough was unwilling to mount the veiled throne, three years later she wrote a little jealously of those who did: "The love of gain, it is said, pervades the whole family, and even Lady Hertford is so fond of diamonds that the Prince's finances can hardly suffice. Notwithstanding this, to be just in his dealings, he had ordered Col. McMahon to write to Mrs. Fitzherbert assuring her of his regard, and sending her a fine necklace as a New Year's gift."

To the Regent's heart there opened many mansions, or rather compartments. Lady Hertford occupied a suite, for the Hertford family did not lose by their connection with the Regency. Lord Hertford was made Chamberlain and given the Garter, for she insisted on "most decorous and conventional relations," to use Professor Webster's phrase, once declining to receive Madame de Staël on the score of her immorality. An artistic feeling united the Regent and Lord Hertford, and the magnificent collection now owned by the nation in Hertford House commemorates the taste inspired by the Regent in the Seymour family. Lord Yarmouth, the son, entered the Royal Household, and was known as the "Yarmouth Bloater," in reference to his bright whiskers. The joke is sometimes obscured by historians who allude to him as "red herrings." Hertford House was the "Gaunt House" described by Thackeray in the brilliant and empty Regency novel *Vanity Fair*. Lord Hertford himself, and not his son, was probably the "Marquis de Steyne." It was an anachronism of Thackeray to say, "the Prince and Perdita have been in and out of that door." Perdita had been sent to perdition long before with the fogs and snows of yester-year.

Lady Hertford's empire was considered by Wraxall to be intellectual, though she "does indeed inspire passion in some sense of the word." Lady Hertford, described brutally by contemporaries as his mistress, appears in the light of investigation rather as his Empress. She was a haughty dame, and declined to live under the same roof, except when he paid her husband visits at Ragley Hall. It was the proximity to Ragley

PLATE III.—DELILAH AND SAMSON (LADY HERTFORD AND THE PRINCE)

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that drew the Prince to Cheltenham, which totally failed of the social brilliance that his amour with Mrs. Fitzherbert had conferred upon Brighton. Lady Hertford was described as a Juno, and the Prince as Mercury rather than Jupiter. Every afternoon that he was in town he drove in his yellow chariot with the purple blinds down behind his nonpareil bay horses to Manchester Square, and, where visitors now admire the Hertford Collection, he made sweet converse to the vain and elderly Marchioness. Here imperious influence was exerted in a Tory and Protestant direction. Long after her power had waned, she told the Duke of Cumberland that the Regent was a very clever man, without any of the common sense of the Duke of York, but always governed by the last person who spoke to him. She was accordingly careful to be the last person to speak to him on important occasions.

The politics of the Regent became largely hers, though he took an eclectic line or, at least, he always laid himself open to suggestions and changes until the last moment. Of one thing he was heartily sick, and that was the time-honoured references to Pitt and Fox. He decided that it was time "to leave at rest the ashes of the two great men" as well as Tory-Whig animosities. He had assumed the Regency with a list of possible new Whig Ministers, but when Grey wished the royal henchmen Sheridan and Moira to be dropped, the Prince had dropped the Whigs and retained the narrow Tory Perceval. Hertford House on the Catholic Question approved Perceval who, in the course of writing a Tract on the Prophet Daniel, had come to take a very disparaging view of the Papacy.

Perceval was not too pliant, though plied with Sheridan's ready pen, and the Regent found that he could still be criticised and thwarted by a mere Minister over the futilities of finance. When he proposed paying his secretary, Colonel McMahon, by making him Widows' Paymaster, Croker wrangled with Creevey in the House. McMahon was then given the Regent's Privy Purse, and paid his own salary therefrom like the unmuzzled ox of Scripture. The Whigs had opposed the Regent's reappointment of the Duke of York to the Army. The Duke's

career was not only unfortunate in the field but scandalous at home. His mistress was shown to have levied commissions on those of officers. It was a remarkable fact that the British Army, when served by corruption and patronage, which is corruption in livery, achieved its greatest glory, while a House fed by rotten boroughs built a legend and a tradition which democracy has never equalled. Even the Navy at its height of fame witnessed the resignation of Secretary Lord Melville on fraudulent charges. The Duke of York withdrew before a scandal, which would have sent most commanders into suicide or exile, but on his brother's nomination returned to the Horse Guards "with the facility of one who had quitted it only for reasons of temporary convenience," remarks the *Annual Register*.

The Regent found a more kindred spirit in the Cabinet than the Premier in Wellesley, the Epicurean brother of the Spartan General in charge of the expedition to the Spanish Peninsula. The Regent enjoyed wheels within wheels and cabal within cabinet, and Wellesley, described very well as "a Spanish Grandee grafted on an Irish potato," pleased him by the prospects of a brilliant policy on the Continent. Wellesley's main object in the Cabinet was to bring support to his brother, whom the Regent, never afraid to advance a great man, had raised to an Earldom on assuming the Regency. Henceforth the Wellesley family played predominant parts in his life. When Wellesley resigned the Foreign Office, the Regent accepted it through Eldon, "the Prince having thought it more consistent that the Pen of the Chancellor should be employed on this occasion." In view of continued War the Regent suggested a coalition with Grenville and Grey or, as he prettily expressed it, with "persons with whom the early habits of my public life were formed." This idea was laid to Hertford House, which was accounted more influential than both Houses of Parliament. Grey and Grenville, not knowing where they were with the Regent, refused. His apparent duplicity in politics was accompanied by a great deal of unpopularity in the country and even by hostile feeling in the streets, but the cloud

was luridly torn by the assassination of Perceval (May 11, 1812). The Government fell with Bellingham's bullet.

The Regent occupied himself in keeping every candidate for office upon tenterhooks. Wellesley was tempted with office, and Creevey scribbled (May 25): "Prinney sent for Wellesley —Don't mention any names to me now, but make an Administration for me. Take your own time though there is not a shilling left in the Exchequer." Nor was there a shilling left in the Regent's pocket, which was a reason why he delayed and dawdled and dandled with prospective Ministers until he could strike a combination, which would be pliant in finance, united in coalition, and worthy of England's military rôle abroad. Wellesley was sent to discuss the Catholic Question with Grey and Grenville, whom the Regent now called "a couple of scoundrels," but Grey said he would "ride roughshod through Carlton House." Sheridan described the Prince's state of mind as beyond anything he had ever seen. "He conceives the different candidates for office to be determined upon his ruin; and in short I begin to think that his reign will end in a day or two in downright insanity. He first sends for one person, then another."

Wellesley was sent for to fuse the two parties on the basis of Catholic peace at home and war to the knife in Spain. Wellesley was undone, when Hertford House persuaded the Regent he had no following. But Wellesley left an abiding influence upon the Regent for he recommended him the apothecary Knighton, who later became his closest confidant and secretary. According to Lady Charlotte Bury: "Sir William Knighton found some papers in a hackney coach, and the bribe to secrecy led to his position as the King's right-hand man." Grey and Grenville did not favour the War, but they stood for Catholic Relief. They were also determined to dismiss the Household, which included the influence of Hertford House, but the dice once more were weighted against the unlucky Whigs. The Regent only wanted Grey and Grenville as ballast to his own nominees, and Cabinets still came to pieces in his hands. Moira was dismissed and then recalled to a tearful reconciliation. He also failed to form a Government. By

June Creevey suspected the Regent of "playing some devilish deep game." After everybody had been duped and foiled, the Regent quietly obliterated the Whigs and entrusted the Government temporarily to Lord Liverpool, a sanctimonious Tory, but out of a blue sky in Spain thundered the victory of Salamanca, and Lord Liverpool remained in office for fifteen years.

Sheridan stayed by his master, and confessed that the Regent was "acting as honourably as man can do." Erskine, who had everything to lose, justified the exclusion of the Whigs, considered that Grey and Grenville made themselves impracticable by sending a round-robin to decline compromise. Lady Hertford asking Erskine why, as the Regent's friend, he did not support the Government by his vote, he replied that the Regent told him to vote as he felt. In the same spirit the Regent approved Sheridan, while a member of his Household, voting according to his Irish conscience on the Catholic Question. Erskine later told Cam Hobhouse that the Regent had approved him putting his principles before his Prince and defending Tom Paine's radical book, which incidentally attacked the Royal Family, though perhaps not as fiercely as they sometimes attacked each other. In any case the Regent had performed his first and famous dishing of the Whigs, for which neither they nor their scribes have forgiven him in this world or the next. Explanation is easier than apology to his historian. On one of the rare occasions when he deigned to be his own historian, George simply stated that he "withdrew himself from his early friends for the good of the country." But Fox was dead, and Sheridan was drinking.

It is interesting to trace the slow but destined rise of his new friends or advisers to power. He, who had taken early counsel of Fox and Burke, was to call a Canning and a Castlereagh to his side. In August of this year Lady Bessborough described finding the Regent anxious to catch Canning, much as he disliked his view on the Catholic Question. He complained "of Canning making causeless difficulties and, to use his own Royal phrase, raising his price in proportion as he is courted." Later the Regent entered her carriage and, "as

Lord Grey says, no woman can withstand a Prince or a story, I yielded to the double temptation. He praised Canning extremely, expressed a great wish to attach him to him, but added: He takes as much courting as a woman and a great deal more than most." Nevertheless the Regent had accepted the Tories, perhaps opportunely, for, as Buckingham wrote, " he appeared to look to what he might gain as Prince but as Regent to what he might lose." The country did not lose by his regal advent. The Regency had begun amid shadows, with an insane ruler, an exhausted country, a retreat the only military success, the only diplomatic achievement a blunder.

Corunna and Cintra were not words to turn Napoleon pale. But the Regency brought wingless Victory. At Salamanca the charge of the Dragoons was as much a rout for the Whigs as the French. Wellington's victory over Soult was reported to the Regent, and Croker noted: " You never saw a man so rejoiced." When the baton of Marshal Jourdain was captured at Vittoria and forwarded under the simple label of the Staff of a Marshal of France, the Regent dramatically replied to Wellington: " I send you in return that of England." In his letter to York he could claim that " a new era is now arrived, and I cannot but reflect with satisfaction on the events, which have distinguished the short period of my restricted Regency." What matter if the card parties at the Pavilion were reckoned dull, or whether Yarmouth was gaming deep at the Club, while Lady Hertford played Patience with the Regent! England and Russia were slowly crushing Napoleon. Russia was very ably represented by Princess Lieven at Brighton, who, according to Lady Bessborough, " complains bitterly of *ennui*. Lady Hertford likes her very much." The Russian campaign, together with the Peninsular War, drove Napoleon into abdication. The Emperor retired to Elba, and Carlton House blazed with the *fleur-de-lys*. The restored King of France, Louis XVIII., invested the Regent with the Order of the Holy Ghost, and Clarence conducted him back to France in the Royal Yacht. On the escape of Napoleon from Elba, the Regent and Lady Hertford and her relative Castlereagh were for unquenchable

war. Through the Hertford interest a stronger man than Liverpool had entered the counsels of the Regent, Castlereagh, whose name becomes synonymous with England. The Hundred Days followed, and news of Waterloo was brought as dramatically as the Regent could have wished. With three French Eagles hanging out of a postchaise the messenger found him at a ball in St. James's Square and threw the flags at his feet. Even more dramatic was the humble appeal of the conquered Emperor to "the most relentless, powerful, and generous of his enemies." The Regent left him to the dispositions of Castlereagh and passed on.

The era of Napoleon being closed, and the Czar of Russia being anxious to reap the fruits of victory into a Holy Alliance, the Regent replied gingerly that the British Constitution would not allow him to accept the form, but the principle of the Alliance he heartily endorsed—that the Sovereigns of Europe should " take the divine precepts of the Christian religion as the unalterable rule of their conduct." Henceforth Castlereagh's unswerving influence stiffened the Regent. The Whigs faded away with the celebrations of Waterloo. The Regent was aware that Europe watched and feared Castlereagh, and was content to assume the mantle of awe inspired by the last and most lasting of the English Tories.

England offered sublime mediation between rulers and ruled, and Castlereagh wrote that the Regent " cannot consent that his mediation shall under any circumstances assume an armed character. His intervention must throughout be understood to be confined within the bounds of good offices and the employment of that just influence, which must belong to any great power when labouring only to promote the welfare of an allied Sovereign and his people." Castlereagh, like an exquisite skater upon thin ice, was giving the outside edge to the Holy Alliance. At the Conference of Aix la Chapelle he triumphed by imposing the British policy, telling the Czar himself that " as the Prince Regent could not charge himself with the protection of these people, H.R.H. could not justify to his own feelings even had he the means, the imposing upon them what might prove destructive to their safety."

MEANTIME the Princess of Wales had accepted the situation brought about by prior claims and superior charms. Caroline was Princess but no wife. Mrs. Fitzherbert was wife without being Princess. The Princess was thrown upon her own resources, which tended to be musical and vulgar, and upon a variety of companions. Among her Ladies-in-waiting were the two Charlottes, Lady Charlotte Bury and Lady Charlotte Lindsay, one of whom had been a great beauty, while the other must have been less so, if the story is true, that Lord Goderich once told how Lord North, being asked by a busybody at a party who a certain monster could be, replied that it was his wife. The busybody quickly shifted to the next lady, only to learn she was his daughter. Lord Goderich's listener happened to be the daughter in question, Lady Charlotte Lindsay. But Lady Charlotte Bury's beauty Croker and George the Fourth could agree upon. She kept a Diary, which has been regarded both as a betrayal and an apology for the Princess.

Her pages tell us that the poor Princess was indiscreet, imprudent, impudent and wearisome to friend and foe alike. Consigned to Kensington Palace, she developed the royal habit of "prolonging her pleasures till they became pains." Life with her was described as life in a madhouse. Indeed, Kensington more often than Windsor answered that description. She patronised execrable musicians including one described as "the old orang-outang," and herself sang "squally-squally." She scolded and ranted, and her German squeaks and grunts echo through Lady Charlotte's Diary. She said clever things, and committed absurdly foolish ones. When the lightning fell on the Palace, her superstition foreboded her own downfall, but her reason caused the phenomenon to be recorded in the *Philosophical Transactions*. She tried to ape the Trianon in a Bayswater Cottage. Unloved and unlovable, she hankered for romance and lovers, while professing a creditable dislike for bores, and on occasions expressing what most people only dare to think: "*Mein Gott!* dat is de dullest person Gott

Almighty ever did born !" When her daughter Charlotte was kept from her, she foolishly adopted the son of a sail-maker called William Austin, or in more sentimental moments " Willikins." She liked to think " Willikins " was her child and gossips also liked to think so, in spite of her good-natured repartee: " Prove it and he shall be your King !" One of her companions, Lady Douglas, " a bold showy woman," according to the *Farington Diary*, was dismissed her service, and " became more public in her abuse. But the Prince was considered as being at the bottom of it." This was unlikely, but he was bound to take notice when the Duke of Sussex warned him that the succession might be affected. Pitt, the protector of the Princess, died at this time, and the Prince took immediate steps to save his honour. Commissioners were appointed to carry out a " delicate investigation." As Brougham later pointed out, the troubles of the Princess used to rise from an excessive love for children not her own. The Commission cleared the Princess of having an illegitimate child, but censured her levity, and found her guilty of "unworthy indiscretions." The Prince's suspicions were never appeased, and it was long before he admitted into favour George Canning and Thomas Lawrence, who were both romantically mentioned in the Princess's affairs. Lawrence, the painter of the beautiful, was constrained to clear himself, but even so it was only for Art's sake that the Prince ever sat to him. Lawrence told Farington he could swear the door was never locked, and that the Princess never sat to him without a third person. The resulting picture might have been accepted as silent proof of the painter's integrity, but the Princess enjoyed compromising herself, and, moreover, was described as "incautiously witty," often at her husband's expense. She humorously declared that she had only committed adultery once, and that with the husband of Mrs. Fitzherbert ! And again, " Oh my Gott ! let out the poor dear old King and shut up my husband." The Prince's friends were not slow in counter-witticisms, and Lauderdale hearing that she had dined with the impeached Secretary Melville grunted, " Very good company; two acquitted felons !"

The Princess allowed her wrongs to pass into politics and a secret Book to be composed commemorating her embittered and envenomed relations with the Prince. The unloving pair met for the last time in 1807. Lady Bessborough watched them and wrote that "they did not speak, but coming close together both looked contrary ways like the print of the spread-eagle." In subsequent years they were destined to scuffle like royal eagles mewed behind their ceremonial cage. While the Regent became more and more Conservative, the Princess veered towards the Radicals. As Regent the Prince had carried out that operation known in politics as "dishing the Whigs." The Radical Opposition snatched the chance of dishing him in Caroline's sauce. Whitbread had defended the Princess in the Commons with unctuous magnanimity, but mortally offended the woman by requesting her to cover her neck in public! Whitbread and Creevey pressed Perceval to allow the Princess honours equal to the Regent. Perceval, who was supposed to be the author of the Book containing the Princess's attack on the Prince, would have published it, if on the fall of the Grenville Ministry he had not become Premier. He found respectful silence the wisest shield against the laughter of the House. Perceval was nevertheless placed between two stools. The *Granville Papers* describe "all Carlton House in uproar at Mr. Perceval's assertion of the Princess's innocence while the Princess's confidential friends abuse Mr. Perceval for speaking coldly of her virtues."

Meantime the Whig and Radical Opposition had adopted the Princess as a means of making the Regent unpopular, even sending her to the Opera to scoop his share of applause. "Beelzebub" Brougham, as Creevey decreed him, was quick to appreciate Caroline as a "constitutional means of making head against a revenue of 105 millions." Brougham called the Regent the *Bourgeois gentilhomme*, which he thought would "annoy Prinney more than even our fat friend" (Brummell's parting shot). When the Allied Sovereigns arrived prematurely in London to celebrate the fall of Napoleon they were notified of the Princess's disgrace. The Regent had decided "not to meet the Princess upon any occasion private

or public " or to allow her to meet others. The King of Prussia would only send an equerry to wait on the daughter of a Duke, who had died for him in battle. Her brother could do nothing for her except mimic the Prince Regent and Castlereagh, who would do nothing to help him regain his much-trampled Duchy. The mother of the Princess arrived and was invited to dine with the Regent alone. She riposted by inviting her daughter instead to dine with her. The Princess wished to give " both her ugly ears " to persuade the Czar to visit her. " She had hopes," we are told, " but waited in vain, tormented by a friend's false rumour." The Prince told Croker that she was a firebrand in the family, and " the thing I hate most in the world, a female politician." The mob made the private affairs of the ill-advised Princess their own, and shouted into the Regent's state-coaches, " Where's your wife?" which the Prince, with uneasy humour, assured the Czar was intended for him. Creevey reported the Regent " worn out with fuss, fatigue, and rage." No wonder. There was the howling mob in the streets, the Princess cheered at the Opera, and the Czar not only dancing with Lady Jersey but kissing her white arm. There was a little entrescene, and as she passed on the arm of All The Russias, the Regent cut her curtsey dead. But, in spite of petty annoyances to his pride and patience, the Regent had made London the Capital of Europe for the first and the last time.

When the cleavage of the Continent ceased, party differences grew more acute in England. The Tories had won on Napoleon, and the Radicals hoped to win on the Princess. Her chosen counsel, Brougham, tarred her on to attend the Peace celebration in St. Paul's. Creevey noted with due edification that " Hertford *cornuto* writes saying the whole sets in St. Paul's are arranged by the Regent, and Mrs. Prinney can't have one." From the political point of view, he found that " the game is alive again." The Government in despair offered extra income to the Princess to leave the country, which she did to the fury of Brougham, and " bungling the thing so completely, snapping eagerly at the cash, and concluding with a civil observation," as though civility between husband and wife was the last

thing a lawyer should cultivate. Caroline's civility was to the effect that she wished to prove no "obstacle in the way to obstruct the tranquillity of the Prince Regent."

Permission given to leave the country, the Princess threw her private sorrows and public defenders to the winds. "I have been dreadfully tormented by Whitbread and Brougham about my going abroad," she wrote. In the autumn of 1814 she embarked on H.M.S. *Jason*, and wrote to Lady Charlotte Bury that one of the royal Dukes had told the captain that "he would be a damned fool if he did not make love to his royal passenger. *Mein Gott!* that is the morality of my brothers-in-law" was her departing squeak. However, she passed intact through the hands of the British Navy, who had brought her to England and were yet to conduct her last and tragic passage home. Her Kensington cage opened into a world-laid trap. She was followed by her husband's hatred and the invisible spies of his Government.

As a matter of fact the Government breathed relief when the Princess of Wales went on the Continent. The Opposition looked fretfully and feebly round. Brougham was not content with satirising the Regent's corsets and legs. His duty in Opposition was "to badger Prinney," whom he served with "a formal notice from his wife that in May she returns to Kensington Palace." As for a divorce, "both Carlton House and Hertford House say the matter is finally at rest." But Brougham hardly reckoned what a fool resentment could make the Princess, though he may have suspected how little the Prince Regent's tranquillity entered her scheme of life.

In vain Brougham urged her to return. Whitbread could worry her no more, for in a sudden access of weakness or strength he cut his throat. In the ardent and arduous days of the Regency politicians often committed actual suicide, instead of using the more cumbrous method of writing their Memoirs. The Princess continued to scorn the advice of her friends, to indulge in foolish romances, and to return the Prince's hate red hot. "As long as dat man lives, *les choses vont de mal en pire* for me." She used to roast his pin-pricked effigy in wax

over the fire. "There is a vast sympathy between the Prince Regent and the Princess in their loves as well as in their hatreds," shrewdly observed Lady Charlotte. The Princess never minded nor minced what she said. One of her favourite plans was "to kill the Regent, then go abroad with a Court of her own making, of which the fiddler is to be King." Leaving the first part of the programme unfinished, she certainly carried out the rest.

Her progress through the Continent was worthier of a circus than of the Court circular. Her servants occupied an old London and Dover Mail Coach, and her English suite were gradually replaced by picturesque and avaricious Italians. She forgot Lord Malmesbury's advice. She made her courier, Bergami, her favourite, and took several male and female cormorants of his ilk into her service. Bergami was uniformed as a Hussar and addressed by the style of Baron. In the evening he wore one of the royal gowns as his dressing robe. Spies watched their foolish intimacies, and the details of their chamber were collected by those who scented profit as well as scandal. At Naples the Princess had also forgotten the advice of poor Whitbread, for she appeared insufficiently clothed as the Genius of History. Before long it was clear that she had forgotten all Lord Malmesbury told her about the extreme penalty.

The pitiable and ridiculous party wandered over Europe and reached Jerusalem, where the Princess founded the new Order of Saint Caroline with the same right that such Orders are ever founded. It was dedicated to *Sancta Carolina*, an unknown candidate for canonisation, perhaps as a hint to persecuting princes. The lilac ribbon, the red cross, and the original motto chosen by the Princess (*Honi soit qui mal y pense*) were conferred upon William Austin, but the platonic Grand Mastership was made hereditary in the Bergami family. Bergami's brother was made Prefect of the Palace, and his sister raised to the suitable rank of Countess. The Regent, closely informed, began to realise that this frantic frump was not only parading his name through Europe, but parodying his own Household. She was no fool and, as was to appear during her fantastic Trial before the Lords, she was not adulterous, but

she caressed Bergami in public, and took to herself the airs of a runaway romantic. Lady Charlotte Bury cast one look at Bergami and that was enough: "Six feet high, a magnificent head of black hair, pale complexion mustachios which reach from here to London," and she meditated of the Princess: "What a heroine in history she would have been had she behaved properly; there had been something so grand in her conduct up to that period, something so magnanimous in her silent endurance of her husband's malevolence that could not fail to create a strong feeling in her favour. But when she went abroad, she dropped the grand historical character of an injured Queen and became a Mrs. Thompson parted from Mr. Thompson and going in search of amusement."

Every effort was made by the Government through the proper channels to curtail her amusements. British diplomacy was instructed that she was not to be received by continental royalty, though she managed to secure furtive attentions from the Bishop of Rome, from the Bourbons regnant at Palermo, and the Dey of Algiers. While the Princess was the guest of the Dey, the British Navy arrived rather inconveniently under Lord Exmouth, and with true courtesy persuaded the Princess to leave before bombarding her host. There was no corner of Europe which was not the scene of her fantastic progresses or which did not echo her tactless tongue. When received by the unhappy Queen of Sweden, she only hasted to remind her that she also had been deserted by her husband. At Baden she made any serious reception difficult, according to Lord Redesdale, by wearing half a pumpkin to keep her head cool. The Austrian Emperor received the Regent's eternal gratitude for refusing her, and likewise Louis XVIII., who may have heard of her query when the *Saint Esprit* was conferred on her husband, whether it was to be supposed that he lacked *esprit* or *sainteté*.

It seems difficult to believe that such ever was the conduct of one who intended to claim the throne of Great Britain. It is less difficult to understand the feelings and conduct of the Prince as Regent and King towards one, whom he was now determined not to allow to queen him or his realm ever.

# PRINCESS CHARLOTTE

The birth of a Princess as heir to the throne brought more distraction to the Royal Family. She became a pivot of division between father and mother, and between her own father and his. Her care and education were a matter of continuous concern to the old King, who even in moments of insanity would mutter: "The Princess shall have her child." The Prince was no less determined that she should not, although in view of the War he was as anxious for Coalition in the Royal Family as in the Government, and viewed the importance "of the whole Royal Family appearing united in a moment so awful as the present." Through Moira the Princess Charlotte was offered to Pitt as a bait. The King declared he required reflection before he could bring himself to receive the publisher of his letters, but he was overpowered by his desire to educate the future Queen. He was convinced that the Prince was an improper influence, and the Prince was no less convinced that the Princess of Wales would turn her daughter against him. Accordingly the Prince was careful not to mention her name in his offer to the King, and the offer was made on condition that the Princess was barred interference. "That condition was only through notions of peculiar delicacy indicated by the word *exclusively*." When the King hinted mother's rights, the father withdrew his offer angrily.

The King accused him of chicane, and professed to cloak his own fury under "stoical indifference." But in the clash of correspondence the Prince wrote like a polished gentleman, and the King with the utmost harshness and lack of tact. Fox summarised the clash as follows: "The Prince sent an answer refusing peremptorily to give up his daughter, and for what had passed referring them to Moira. Luckily enough, Moira had left with the Prince a written summary of what had passed between Pitt and him which entirely justified the Prince's interpretation."

That was in 1804. Princess Charlotte soon showed that she was her father's child. Impulsive, capricious, and vehement,

playful, shrewd, and brave, she was easily melted and drawn into passionate feelings. The domestic negotiations finally placed her under a Governess and the Bishop of Salisbury, who taught her a dutiful detestation of Popery and Whiggery, qualified by such of the teachings of Fox as her father thought fit to cast into her curriculum. The Rev. Mr. Nott became her instructor. In 1806 she seems to have wearied of some of her entourage and even of life, for she wrote her last Will and Testament concluding:

"Nothing to Mrs. Udney for reasons. I have done my will and trust that after I am dead a great deal may be done for Mr. Nott. I hope the King will make him a Bishop."

The Regent called this document high treason, but a sweet little apology survives among the *Fitzherbert Papers* (May 6, 1806): "I am very sorry that in going into your rooms I have offended you. If I had not been so thoughtless, it would not have happened. Let me assure you, my dear Papa, that I will never go near the house again without your leave or do anything contrary to your wishes."

The Prince must have sent Mrs. Fitzherbert the note as a proof of a submissiveness, which did not last long on the part of the Princess. Charlotte grew up a "gawky garrulous girl," with very pretty legs and feet. She appeared much excited by the strange family into which she had been born. Her father continued to restrain her from her mother, whom she was allowed to meet once a fortnight, and her grandfather to restrain her from her father. The Princess was reproved for referring to the old Queen as "the Merry Wife of Windsor." Of her grandfather she wrote: "I understand he is as mad as puss!" She was very emancipated. She was a Whig! According to Lady Anne Hamilton she had come to the satisfactory state of opinion "that mankind in reason, policy, philosophy and religion were all of one great family." She was presented to the nation at the Ball given to celebrate the battle of Vittoria. Her features were noble, her skin white and her hair of a golden bloom, and already she had more and more of a will and a way of her own. She laid down that she would be presented to

the Queen by her mother or by nobody. When the Prince imposed the Duchess of Leeds as a new Governess, she asked her mother to be polite to her, and surmounted her own feelings by calling the Duchess her first lady. The mother seemed anxious to worry the Prince by her daughter's means. She did not mind her meeting the mistresses of the Royal Dukes. "Oh Lord upon us! vat would you have? de Dukes cannot marry, dey must love somebody," she said in ironical comment of the Royal Marriage Act. Relations did not improve between her parents, and her mother forbidden to visit her daughter at Windsor, demanded the refusal in handwriting. Arrangements were not facilitated by the script of the Princesses. The Princess of Wales dictated letters that her Lady-in-waiting scarcely found intelligible, and the daughter wrote pages that were wholly illegible.

The Regent had long declined to read any letters from the Princess, who vainly wrote to the Papers asking that her daughter might enjoy "the benefit of confirmation." Brougham told her to command the Chancellor by law to lay her letter before the Regent. The Premier answered that "H.R.H. was not pleased to signify any commands upon it." Why should he, since it was palpable that Brougham had composed it? The Regent became jealous of the popularity of his heiress, that general infirmity of royal minds, and forbade her the use of the royal liveries. He had decided it was time for her to marry, and he did not seem to mind how soon she left the country. The hereditary Prince of Orange was called, though not eventually chosen. He was "a very thin ill-looking man in a plain suit with the star of the Black Eagle of Prussia," and in default of royal hospitality he lodged at his tailor, so great presumably had English Dandies made English tailors loom in foreign eyes. Dutch envoys demanded Charlotte's hand, jewels were ordered on Dutch credit, and a residence was mooted in Holland. But the Princess demanded security for her perpetual residence in England, and for the postnuptial reception of her mother by her husband. She received neither. The Regent sent her a wedding list which omitted her mother's

name. The spirited daughter of her father returned it after scratching out the name of her affianced. The Prince of Orange injudiciously called while she was in bed, and refused to leave until she received him. Bad temper followed on the part of the Princess, and bad English on the part of the Prince. She broke off her engagement, and threw herself into the arms of her new Governess, Miss Mercer, for whom she had conceived frenzied friendship. Miss Mercer was the "fop's despair."

Naturally followed a good deal of trouble, and royal guests celebrating the Peace in London were diverted by hearing the Opposition stage the whole affair in the Commons: "A scene well calculated to make the foreign potentates stare," observed Creevey, who also recorded that the Prince of Orange had been exhibited drunk to the Princess by Würtemberg, who "took the opportunity of making love on his own score, and has been forbid Carlton House."

When the Princess broke her engagement, her mother delightedly noted that her daughter "has resumed her former character of intrepidity and fortitude, as her father frightens her in every way." The Regent was determined to frighten her this time, and suddenly dismissed her Household and ordered her into quarantine near Windsor. "Depend upon it, as long as I live, you shall never have an establishment unless you marry," was his ultimatum. The Princess Charlotte instantly took flight, jumped into a common cabriolet, and offered a guinea to be taken to Oxford Street, near where her mother was residing.

> "Yes she, for whom in battlefield
> A million heroes swords would wield
> And Peers obedience humbly tender,
> A Jarvey chose for her defender."
>
> PETER PINDAR.

This alone made her a popular heroine, not that it was not already obvious to populace and politicians that, in the words of William Cory, "the useful but somewhat vulgar House of Brunswick was in this one child glorified and hallowed."

Royal Dukes, Bishops, and Chancellors were soon in hot

pursuit, and the Princess was found at her mother's house. Unfortunately her mother was away on a jaunt, and etiquette made it essential that the possible mother of future Kings should not spend a night from her own roof. A very agitated scene passed, and it was not until dawn that Brougham persuaded her that her flight, together with the Cochrane Election then imminent, might precipitate a Revolution, and she consented to be driven in a royal carriage with the Duke of York to Carlton House. The Regent moved her into immediate quarantine. An order survives in the Regent's script permitting a visit from the adored Miss Mercer, whose vast collection of Charlotte's letters he made subsequent efforts to recover, suspecting the part in which he might have been figured. During separation a fulsome and illegible letter daily attested the depth of the Princess's affection. A century has passed and nobody's eyes or patience have been sufficient to wade through these criss-crossed rhapsodies. By one of Time's startling jokes Miss Mercer was destined to come nearer to the throne of England than her royal charge, for Clarence, the future William the Fourth, in an expansive moment proposed to the Governess, but Miss Mercer eventually married the son of Talleyrand, and became an ancestress of the Lansdowne family, in whose Archives Princess Charlotte's letters survive.

The public excitement added to the Regent's unpopularity. The silly mob adjured the Princess not to desert her mother, but it was the sillier mother who later was tempted to desert her daughter. Brougham tried to prevent her by telling her daughter that departure would be followed by divorce, and that if the Regent married again and begot a son, there would be no Queen Charlotte the Second. Both mother and daughter were preening and priming themselves for Queenship sooner or later, a prospect not lost sight of by the opportunist champions of the mother or the inopportune swains of the daughter. It was obvious that Princess Charlotte's husband would have more than a lover's finger in the pie of the world. He would be Prince Consort of England. His sons would sway Europe.

Of this Princess Charlotte was aware, and had decided to

PLATE IV.—THE RATIFICATION OF PEACE (PRINCESS CHARLOTTE, THE REGENT AND THE DUKE OF YORK)

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sort a consort for herself. During the Allied fêtes in London there was a considerable display of Princes and Princelings, including Leopold of Saxe-Cobourg-Gotha, whose Duchy had been trampled and forgotten in the Napoleonic wars. He had come to England in the suite of the Czar, whom he had served in the field, and he brought in his attendance a physician named Stockmar, who described his master as "always quiet, always circumspect. He will never be elated by prosperity or cast down by adversity. He sees everything in its true light. This preserves him from mistakes and mortifications." Whatever mortifications fate preserved for this circumspect Prince, Destiny included no mistakes in his dossier. Immediately and wisely he saw the Princess Charlotte in her true light as a future Sovereign, and when she showed signs of being attracted by him, more wisely still he withdrew to the Continent, leaving the Princess to manage the Regent, who disliked Prince Leopold from the first, rather neatly designing him as *le Marquis Peu à Peu*. Leopold's patience and judgment were rewarded, and at the beginning of 1816 he was invited to return to England and marry the Princess. The young and happy couple were solemnly married in Carlton House in the presence of the moribund old Queen. The Regent gave his daughter to the princely groom, and the Princess had the spirit to laugh, when Leopold solemnly promised to endow her with all his goods. Leopold, though excellent in many ways, was not susceptible to humour, and on account of his air of pious adventurer was nicknamed "Humbug" in Creeveian circles.

The happy pair retired to Claremont, near Esher, and the following year brought promise of a future sovereign. The London Clubs betted freely whether a King or a Queen was embryonic. The light-hearted Princess was attended by the envy of his profession, Sir Richard Croft, whose voice broke ominously through the *Granville Papers* five years previously: "Oh, what stories I could tell you of cross births and hard labours." The hardest was before him, and the "fidgety and good-natured" Croft was totally unequal to a cross birth. The labour of the lovely Princess proved slow and, as sometimes

happens in the history of the royal House, a scientific German doctor watched an English practitioner without being called until it was too late. Jealousy and incompetence proved fatal to the Princess. Stockmar, the German leech and confidant of Prince Leopold, found the physicians plying her with wine. "They have made me tipsy," groaned the dying mother of a stillborn King. Her own end was near. She turned several times upon her face, drew up her legs, the hands grew cold, and about 2 a.m. on November 6, 1817, some five hours after her delivery, she died.

As William Cory wrote, "The sensibility of the people found in this domestic bereavement a sublime calamity and the righteousness, which was outraged by the Princess Charlotte's parents, relieved itself by more emphatic worship of her unsullied wifehood. Thus was created a type or ideal of a Princess." In that piteous hour for England were changed histories and dynasties. The end of the Brunswicks was wrote upon the wall. The Regent was staying with the Hertfords, and the old Queen was being regaled at Bath, when dread warnings arrived. The Regent posted through the night in vain, receiving the final news at Carlton House. He was inconsolable, immuring himself in emotional grief. For a moment his enemies were softened to him. Aimless as Fate had appeared to act, it was singular that twice in English History the coming of great Reform had been heralded by the death of an heir-apparent. But the death of Princess Charlotte was received not as an omen but as a national calamity. The royal House faced extinction. The grief of the nation was sincere, and Byron supplied the note inachievable to a Laureate like Southey, who only pictured the dead Princess carrying to the dead worthies of England "the virtuous story" of her father's reign! Byron struck the note sublime;

> "Of sackcloth was thy wedding garment made,
> Thy bridal's fruit is ashes: in the dust
> The fair-haired daughter of the Isles is laid,
> The love of millions! how we did entrust
> Futurity to her."

By a lamentable error the death of the Princess was not officially notified to her mother. On receiving the news she erected a pathetic cenotaph in an Italian garden, while Metternich forwarded to the Foreign Office her grim comment that "the death of the Princess was due to men and not to God." Finding that she was never to be treated as a Princess of Wales she wrote: "I will be Caroline, a happy merry soul," and who could find heart or reason to forbid her? Whether the disaster was due to men or God, it was the unfortunate Croft who took the blame to heart and shot himself, leaving, it was said, his Shakespeare open at the oracular text, "the Princess, oh the Princess!" Undefended by his own profession, it fell to the philosophical Stockmar to utter words, which apply to half the failures and tragedies of life, "Peace to thy ashes, on which no guilt rests, save that thou wast not exceptionally wise or exceptionally strong." They were words of ironical compassion, which he never needed to apply to his master.

The harvesting of Death menaced the members of the Royal Family, whose passing seemed the more terrible to obscure mortals in that their coming had been more auspicious and their staying so magnificent. The old Queen died in the year following her namesake. Her death was not notified to the vagrant Princess of Wales, who had already received the stray news that she "was on her last legs" with indifference, writing grimly "there was a time when such intelligence would have gladdened me." Indifference left her charitable at least.

Of the old Queen's attitude to Caroline a writer in the *Atlas* wrote; "she was a strict moralist though her conduct to one part of her family was perhaps more rigorous than just. Her proudest Drawing Room was the hearth of her home. Her brightest gems were her children." Death was already showing himself jealous of some of those gems. Princess Charlotte died in 1817, followed by the old Queen in 1818, and the Duke of Kent in 1819, but not before he had made a gallant effort to continue the royal line. His death only preceded his father's by a few days. On the midnight of January 29, 1820, the great

bell of Paul's tolled for the Third George, no more to be troubled by a world in which he had exercised varying empire or by a moon, which for times and seasons laid sway upon him. The longest reign in previous English history was closed in the presence of the beloved Duke of York and the less endearing Doctor Willis. The Prince Regent was not present, but not for unfeeling or unfilial reasons. He came within an ace of being carried off himself, and was only saved by the prompt courage of Doctor Tierney, who waived all ceremony and bled the Lord's anointed-elect. Windsor seemed to lie under Death's swathe. For each candidate passing from royal to celestial honours the Georgian Mausoleum was opened, and coffin by coffin the majestic family Royal of England descended to their apportioned niche, while the music of Handel softened the harsh timing of the minute guns fired in farewell honour of those to whom the minutes were becoming as hours and the hours as eternity.

# QUEEN CAROLINE

*Galignani's Messenger* announced in 1819 that the Princess of Wales intended returning in search of justice for herself. The death of the old King encouraged her to believe that she could assume Queendom. The political setting was ripe. The Great War had been followed by increasing taxes and increasing population. Ricks were burning in the country, and Orators were firing the towns. The Tories had lost the protective halo of war and the Whigs found the more radical stealing their thunder. The Opposition was divided into Whigs, Jacobins and Saints (corresponding to the modern Liberals, Socialists and Nonconformists), all of whom tended to support the Queen against a King who supported the illiberal Castlereagh. The Jacobins in the House were called the " Mountain," but as long as they declined to approach the Whig Mahomets, there was no cohesion, and the Tories held power by virtue of the portent of Waterloo. Neither Whig nor Tory magnates realised their day was over. The massacre of Peterloo symbolised the coming of Liberal, Radical and Socialist power in England. Over this red and rising foam the Queen spread her travel-stained mantle.

Shelley, the poet of domestic and divine anarchy, chanted;

> " She is returned. Taurina is in Thebes
> When Swellfoot wishes that she were in Hell !
> Oh Hymen clothed in yellow jealousy
> And waving o'er the couch of wedded kings
> The torch of discord with its fiery hair."

The King had taken Radicalism seriously. As Regent he refused to receive petitions for Reform, and encouraged the Tory panic which carried even the Whig Grenvilles into Acts of repression. *Habeas Corpus* and the Cambridge Debating Union had been suspended. Buckingham had been made a Duke, and a million of sterling voted to build Churches. All should have been right with the world. But the Queen offered the Radicals an innings. There were signs already of

revolutionary thought elsewhere than among the aristocracy. The Whig theory had always worked on condition that Radicals were gentlemen, and that the Crusaders of Democracy like Byron in Greece or Cochrane in Chile or Nugent in Spain were drawn from the House of Lords and confined their operations to the Continent. In those days British Radicalism mixed a Negus of its own. There were the angry poets in exile. There was Leigh Hunt in prison awaiting immortality in *Bleak House*. There was Henry Hunt brandishing an uncertain emblem styled the British tricolour. There was Cobbett bringing the ashes of Tom Paine in his kitbag from America. There was honest Major Cartwright proposing Household Suffrage to the nervous victors of Waterloo. And now there was the Queen, God bless her!

As the King's death and her succession had not been announced to her, Brougham demanded a courier's passport, which the French Government granted, though at Liverpool's request without naming her as Queen. The Opposition made a little triumph later in exacting the word from the lips of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Defeated at election the Radical Alderman Wood followed Brougham to the Continent to catch the rising sun in France.

The Queen found herself in Italy, and immediately claimed a sovereign's escort from Pius VII., which the sagacious Cardinal Consalvi refused, deciding that "the Papal Government does not know that the Queen of England is in Rome." The British and Papal Governments were at peace. The Queen in consequence described Consalvi as "a creature from the throne of George IV." With impartial disgust and partial terror the King learnt of her approach to England. Proclaimed King within the Ionic screen of Carlton House, he spent an anxious Sunday examining old Prayer Books, lest it might be necessary to recognise her in the Liturgy. If her name could be presented to God, she could obviously be present at Court. The Primate was for praying for her, but the King had long and perhaps rightly decided she was past praying for. Any union that survived between the ill-mated pair was that

of a tin can attached to a dog's tail. The King desired divorce.

Terms were sent to the Queen in France, but refused on Brougham's advice at St. Omer, where the Queen expediently exchanged the company of Baron Bergami for Alderman Wood! The use of the Royal Yacht was refused in turn, and the Queen landed from the packet at Dover where the guns saluted without orders. Her triumph was immediate, although the Opposition split in the day of their opportunity. Grey and Grenville saw she made more a fool than a foil, and stayed icily aloof, while Brougham roused the mob like a hotwater bubble. Unconvicted accomplices of the Cato Street Conspiracy followed her chariot wheels. The Queen's domestic agitation was to engender and hasten the coming of the Reform Bill.

Meantime there was a comic Civil War. The Parlour and the Shop were for the Queen. The Servants' Hall and the Alehouse were for the King. Feeling in the Navy and the Army was for the Queen, and cries were heard on her behalf when the King reviewed the troops at Hounslow. There was disaffection in the Guards, and Lady Hertford's windows were broken by the sentimental. The Queen used her triumph oddly and drove through the London streets in a dirty old carriage, the King and the Duchess of Gloucester flying to the garrets of Carlton House to watch her pass. To the crowd's delight the sentries presented arms. She lodged with her chief supporter Alderman Wood. King and Kingdom were thrown into confusion, but the Queen's action brought King and Ministers closer together, the King threatening to withdraw to Hanover if they were not amenable. Greville noted; "that the King should have Ministers whom he abuses and hates, and who entertain corresponding sentiments of aversion to him; yet they defend all his errors and follies and he affords them constant countenance and protection." Canning, who had previously obliged the Government by persuading the Queen to go abroad, had the manliness to make a speech favourable to the Queen, which led to an interview with the King lasting fifty-two minutes by Yarmouth's watch. Yarmouth was organising the King's

friends in the Lords. Canning resigned from office, and the King, ill-advised by Sir John Leach and Knighton, struck the Queen's party with all the strength of the Cabinet. Evidence had been collected against the Queen, and she was summoned to Trial. The evidence, as Greville very rightly said, "probably is partly true and partly false." Commissioners had been to Milan and had collected many ignominies which Castlereagh presented to the House in a green bag, whereat the wits quoted the Scripture, "My transgression is sealed up in a bag." Castlereagh had no doubt of the Queen's guilt, for he was agitated when Canning refused to be among her accusers. He informed Metternich; "I doubt not we shall carry the King through his difficulties. The public mind is still much poisoned, but truth never fails in this country finally to triumph." Castlereagh had made Radicalism and impiety and disloyalty seem the same. The Queen gave Radicals not only a regal tinge but the appearance of Matrimony's defenders. The Saints cloaked the associates of Thistlewood. A Queen's Trial is a serious matter, for in the Civil Law her adultery is treason. Revolution in England is said to flow from material, but abroad from moral sources. This time Radicalism claimed the morale. She was no doubt what Blackstone would style "an enormous offender." If Caroline of Brunswick could be proved guilty, she could be as properly executed as Anne Boleyn. The Attorney-General declared the Queen's adultery at Naples on the night of November 9, 1814, and, as Halevy remarks, "for a fortnight the whole English people were obscene."

Foreign Chancelleries threw nervous straws into the wind. At Castlereagh's request Metternich provided a cargo of Italian witnesses, who were dumped upon Westminster Stairs for the King's birthday. They were immured until the King could use them. The royal opponents were fighting without gloves, and struck consistently below the belt. The Queen's counsel, Brougham and Denman and the good Doctor Lushington, opened by demanding that "our most gracious Queen" should be prayed for in all Churches as by law established. "You might as easily move Carlton House," replied Castlereagh,

who was hooted out of Covent Garden by the Queen's mob. Denman pointed out effectively that the Queen's proper place in the Prayer Book occurred in the prayer for all who are desolate and sore oppressed.

The cruel and comic trial of Caroline of Brunswick was conducted before the Lords of England. Liverpool as Premier introduced a Bill of Pains and Penalties rather than lose office.

The Queen did not flinch. Creevey watched her pop into the House of Lords looking like a Dutch toy, duck to the throne, duck to the Peers and jump into her chair. She sported the white sleeves of a Bishop and ringlets that seemed to ring false. The roll of the Peers of England was solemnly called to hear "outlandishers examined thro' interpreters." The Royal Family were pained and appalled but divided. Royal Gloucester would not obey the King's request, and royal Sussex was excused by the Lords to the fury of his better brother of York, into whom Brougham promptly "fired a body blow on Mrs. Clarke's affair" for his pains. The Bill was backed by the Cabinet, the Bishops and the Irish Union Peers with a sprinkling of royal Dukes. But the hereditary English aristocrats determined to give the Queen fair play. Not in vain Brougham appealed to their prudence and pity. The Archbishop of York, being a gentleman, voted against the second reading. The Bishop of Llandaff spoke as a Bishop against, but, as a servant of the State, voted for divorce. Gloucester voted for the Queen, York and Clarence for the King. Denman did not hesitate to salute Clarence with "come forth thou slanderer!" There was little euphemism lost between counsel. Brougham alluded to the King in the words "this shape if shape it could be called, what seemed its head the likeness of a kingly crown had on," and was never forgiven, and Denman unpardonably aspersed the King's person with a scabrous quotation from Tacitus. Witness was countered with witness, and however hot the sauce proffered to the goose, it was poured back boiling on the gander. The wing, which it was charged the Queen added to the Villa d'Este, brought a merry allusion to the Brighton Pavilion, and Denman

met the accusation of levity with the vulgar by comparing the chaff between the King and the waiter, to whom as Prince he had said, "This is all very well between you and me, Sam, but beware of being equally familiar with Norfolk." Creevey wrote that "all the Lords recognised the story and snorted out largely, Bishops, and all."

The Trial makes sorry reading. It pivoted on the fact that the Queen slept on the deck under an awning with Bergami. The Queen's maid was examined against her mistress. At the appearance of another witness the poor Queen fled crying *Traditore!* The witnesses were mostly excitable and bribable Italians, as Brougham pointed out with suave irony, whereas "the whole Helvetic League appeared in the person of a single chambermaid, and the German Empire was represented by a cellar maid."

What did it all matter? There was no proving adultery to the amused but stubborn Peers. What mattered if Erskine spoke "with the tongue of Cicero and the soul of Hampden" before collapsing on the floor? What mattered if Erskine and Grey knocked out Eldon and Liverpool in debate? What mattered if Denman floundered by comparing the Queen to "unsunned snow," and finally begged the Peers to bid the Queen go and sin no more? The more they saw of her the less they thought sinfulness had been possible.

The evidence of two naval officers was introduced in the Queen's defence, but proved almost fatal, as unwittingly they proved the legal "place and opportunity" for adultery. Even so it was judged that the Queen's case was the hundredth, where a decree given for the ninety and nine could be justly refused.

So the Trial veered in favour of the Queen, and Sussex and Prince Leopold for different reasons paid her visits. The Counsel of the Queen concealed trump cards, against which neither King nor Cabinet nor Bishops could make play. In the folds of his gown Brougham fingered the marriage with Mrs. Fitzherbert, to that good lady's keen alarm. The Queen was accused of going to Mass, but the King could be proven to have married a Catholic! Poor Mrs. Fitzherbert began to

PLATE V.—THE GHOST IN ST. STEPHEN'S CHAPEL (QUEEN CAROLINE)

Facing p. 108

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learn of the pains of *Præmunire* and, after scissoring the names of Uncle Errington and brother John from her marriage certificate, withdrew to France.

Brougham wrote to Croker in 1854: "I could have proved it in 1820. I had as my witness Errington . . . Mrs. Fitzherbert herself in like manner, and I had a communication from her in great alarm and rather think I quieted her with a promise not to call her. It was this, to which I alluded mysteriously, when I spoke of throwing the country into confusion. . . . Who doubted (the King's) adultery? But the other meant a forfeiture of the throne or at least a disputed succession. I am quite confident that George was aware of what the real trump was that I had in my hand." And in his *Memoirs* Brougham mentioned the Will, in which the King had called Mrs. Fitzherbert wife. "I had a copy of this, if not the original, given me by her favourite and adopted child, Minney Seymour."

Lady Hardwicke wrote at the time that "the only things certain are the King's fury, the Queen's pride and the Ministers' puzzle." The King's marriage to Mrs. Fitzherbert was also of a certitude and, though it was never breathed, it probably decided the Trial. All else proved to be filth and fun, and was wound up in the famous stanza,

> "Gracious Queen, we thee implore,
> Go away and sin no more;
> But if that effort be too great,
> Go away at any rate."

The lines expressed the growing boredom, which the Queen unwisely failed to notice. The farcical scenes continued. The Queen reviewed five thousand Jack Tars, while Liverpool claimed a great point when he persuaded the King to review the Guards with his arm in a sling. A procession of Braziers arrived to offer the Queen some "men of brass," but

> "by the Lord Harry
> They'll find where they're going much more than they carry,"

riposted Byron. But meantime the Government was immobilised. The Trial coloured and altered the King's relations

with his Statesmen and foreign Sovereigns. He who was against the King was her friend, and who was not for him was an enemy. "The Queen's business," wrote Knighton later, "has been the misery of the King's life," and Castlereagh, who had assigned the Queen as guilty and raked Europe for witnesses, began to feel the counter arm of fate. The Press was demented with scurrility chiefly aimed at the King—"Adonis the Great," "Sultan Sham," "Abomilech King of the Isles." But Theodore Hook, the pet of Hertford House, damaged the Queen considerably by his skits in *John Bull*. Followed a general collapse. As Halevy says, "The effervescence of 1820 masked the Radical decline," but it was no less exhausting to the Government. By the end of the year it could be written that "no man called himself a Tory." If the alliance of Whigs and people was restored, the Whigs were merging into a Party for whom their rivals drew the nickname of Liberals from the Continent. But the Government survived, as long as the King did not combine with their Opposition in the country.

The Lords gave the Bill poor majorities, and Lord Roslyn raised one of the few cheers by calling the evidence corrupt. The Queen won a virtual victory when Liverpool surrendered, moving that the Bill be read six months hence in spite of Eldon's furious "Not Content!" But Clarence from the gallery "hallooed Content with a yell that would have become a savage." That day every ship on the Thames spread bunting, and a twenty-foot Bishop hung from a masthead as high as Haman's gallows. The City stood by the Queen, and she went in full fig and fuss and frumpery to return thanks at St. Paul's, for her acquittal. It was really neither a win nor a lose, but as Lady Elizabeth Stuart neatly wrote, it "saved candles without putting windows in jeopardy." Lady Elizabeth saw the King at this time suffering from gout and unable to "get off his chair without assistance, which was a good hard tug from Lady Conyngham."

The mention of Lady Conyngham assumes a new star in the Court Astrolabe. The King was sincerely in love, and Lord Conyngham acquiesced as wisely as Lord Hertford. The

D.N.B. points out discreetly that she "had much influence on his future career," for owing to "his wife's personal friendship with the Prince Regent he was created Viscount, Earl and Marquis." This reads unfortunately, but there was nothing to prove that their relations were as intimate as those of the Queen and Bergami. Of all the King's loves Lady Conyngham has been the most bitterly and unjustly blamed. News of her advent was brought to that "merry old soul Caroline," who suggested to Lady Charlotte Bury sending a copy of the *Sorrows of Love* to poor Lady Hertford. According to the *Buckingham Papers* the King's conversation had become restricted to Lady Conyngham and the Coronation. "The King grows daily more unpopular, and is the only individual in the kingdom insensible to it. He sees Lady Conyngham daily." The Queen rapidly joined him in the race for unpopularity. Her friends became fewer and she grew into a public nuisance. At the Derby she was ignored by a people who have always been more interested in horses than women. Finally, there are times when a King and his people are one, and such a time is a Coronation.

The King was determined that his Coronation should outshine previous history. Once again the buzzing Queen spoiled his ointment. She was determined to bid for Westminster Abbey or death, and "the King on this subject," the *Buckingham Papers* assure us, "is no less than mad. He has said he would rather die or lose his crown than submit to any compromise with the Queen." When the "merry old soul" amiably wrote to inquire what dress the King wished her to wear in the Abbey, his friends suggested a white sheet in the middle aisle.

Preparations for the Coronation were hurrying apace. Lady Jersey was dying at Cheltenham, and Lawrence was painting Lady Conyngham in Buckingham House. Ministers sat late making up their minds whether to exclude the Queen, and the friends of the Queen were divided whether she should attempt the Abbey or not. The King distributed the Orders of the Garter and Thistle to whomsoever he would. Lord Melville venturing to ask if his Thistle had been mentioned to the Prime

Minister, "Not a word of it, my good lord," his Sovereign assured him. "It is not the least necessary." Likewise the deceased Salisbury's blue riband was conferred on Lord Bath. The King was given a ring by Lady Conyngham to wear during the ceremony. He was bled, and went to sleep the previous evening at the Speaker's House. The Guards had been stationed in the streets all night. Peals of artillery and bells met the glorious morn, while the King sat awaiting news of the movements of the Queen. At five she appeared in a coach and six with Lady Anne Hamilton and Lord Hood, on whose arms she approached the Abbey and tried the entrances. The Guards presented arms, but the cheers of the pavement were met by the derision of the galleries. An altercation followed between Lord Hood and the Door Keeper, at the close of which the Queen was refused admission on the ground that she was not provided with a ticket. Lord Hood produced a ticket for "Wellington," and after a fatal hesitation on the part of the Queen the party drove off amid groans and cheers. Lady Anne Hamilton afterwards wrote an extremely unreliable *Secret History of the Court of England*, in which she blamed Hood for not showing fight at the Abbey Door—"Lord Hood was a peer but, gentle reader, he was also a pensioner." It had been truly said that there were two most wonderful creatures in Europe, Bonaparte and Queen Caroline. The Queen had met her Waterloo, and though she still threatened to counter the King's Irish visit by an excursion to Scotland, she was mortally wounded in her pride, and proceeded to die of the dumps.

Meantime the King had been more splendidly attired than Solomon in all his glory, and after giving a breakfast to the Dandies proceeded to Westminster Hall, where he took charge in directing the officers and heralds to their duties. The only excuse in ritual was allowed to Lord Anglesey who, having left a leg at Waterloo, was graciously bidden "to get down in the best manner he was able." The procession, perhaps the most magnificent that ever passed into the Abbey, dazzled the gaping crowd, who remembered, however, to cheer Alderman Wood

and to hoot Castlereagh. No record was kept of the feelings of Henry Brougham, who helped as a Baron of a Cinque Port to hold the Royal Canopy over the King's head. The Coronation itself was carried out to the gorgeous utmost of splendour and the quaintest extreme of tradition. The Champion rode into the Banquet in Westminster Hall, and threw his challenge from a horse from Astley's Circus to the dead Stuarts. The mounted entry of Wellington and Anglesey in mediæval dress fitted the dramatic sense of the King, who incidentally had ordered the Duke's magnificent saddle at the Duke's expense. The only damper during proceedings was the Archbishop's sermon, which displeased the courtiers and amazed the foreigners. Half a dozen Catholic Peers were allowed to figure in the triumph.

The King was not too well received by the crowd, but towards night fun and fireworks threw the metropolis into a humour as good as the King's. At Drury Lane the *Spectre Bridegroom* was being played, and the preference of "a sovereign to a guinea" received uninterrupted cheers, said the *Annual Register*. Meantime the Spectre Bride had retired to Brandenburgh House to set her dwindling affairs in order. On August 3 she wrote a pathetic will leaving all her property to William Austin, her Willikins, the child she had cherished in mockery of the King's adoption of Minney Seymour. She bequeathed her body to Brunswick, and the cost of her new house to the Government. The Hoods, who took her to the Abbey, received 500 pounds, and Dr. Lushington her old carriage. The royal doctors bled her with leeches and gave her "castor oil that would have turned the stomach of a horse." "I am going to die, Mr. Brougham," said the prostrate Queen, "but it does not signify." But it was her first act as Queen to signify at all. Brougham, leaving a child's sick bed, and Denman, eager to be on circuit, were present faithfully at her death. It was good Dr. Lushington's wedding day, but he attended both events.

She was coffined and blazoned as "THE INJURED QUEEN OF ENGLAND," but the plate was removed and passed into possession of the Lushington family. The word "injured" was

probably a euphemism inserted by her friends, for Brougham recorded that the actual word was "murdered." Mid torrents of rain the body passed through London. The mob forced the funeral into the City, and in the scuffle with the Horse Guards two men were killed. At Harwich the faithful British Navy was waiting, and the crimson coffin was embarked upon a ship of war under the gorgeous flag of England. To the simple chivalry of the sailors she was still Queen of England, personifying the Allegory for which they lived their lives of temporal hardship and achieved their eternal victories. It was an affair which left "an infernal lump" in Creevey's throat, and in most Englishmen's. By stages she was brought to Brunswick, where Death's Head Hussars carried her under the fall of night into the vault, where already reposed the bodies of her father and her brother, both slain in Napoleonic battles. Her Attorney and her Solicitor, whom she had served better than they had served her, proceeded on their way to the Chancellorship and Chief Justiceship of England, while the good Dr. Lushington, accompanied by Mrs. Lushington, continued his honeymoon to the Queen's grave.

Thus then—

> "DEPOSITED CAROLINE OF BRUNSWICK THE INJURED QUEEN OF ENGLAND DEPARTED THIS LIFE 7 AUG IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD 1821 AGED FIFTY THREE YEARS."

LONG in coming, the Crown at last reached the head of Prince nd Regent. The symbol with which George was crowned vas apparently composed of hired jewels, and the King is epresented among the Royal Autographs exposed in the British Museum by a letter to Lord Liverpool (April 22, 1823) ' on the subject of the Coronation Crown. The retention of his was certainly a question of great feeling with me, but I ield that up by making it a question of judgment and ex- pediency. Let me not therefore embarrass you, but do what you may think best. I am sadly fatigued with yesterday and often feel as if other Coronations would soon follow mine. Such alas ! is the history of life in all stations."

As King he immediately set about projects of travel in his Empire. Ireland, Scotland and Hanover had not felt their monarch's foot within generations. Ireland first—for to the Irish Question he had always shown a prescient consideration, writing to Lord Keith (February 20, 1797) " that he wished to go to Ireland to cement a reunion between the two countries. I am ready to go to Ireland not only now but at any future period to endeavour to restore tranquillity, if it is not too late for my hopes of success, but I am confident that no measure could tend so much to the restoring general tranquillity to that disturbed and much injured country as my going Lord Deputy there."

During 1797 the Prince made serious communications to Pitt with a view to the Viceroyalty and pacification of Ireland. By whomsoever inspired and written, they place the Prince immediately in the rank of a statesman. He proposed preventive operations to avert rebellion, and to secure " the aid, support and advantages derived from Ireland." The French invasion and landing had revealed the danger. He proposed winning the Catholics by Emancipation and granting the boon before it was asked. " If formerly the *suprema lex* justified these prohibitory statutes, and on no other principle can they be justified, I am persuaded that it now imperiously demands

their repeal." It was significative that the Irish Envoy to the French Republic McNevin stated as a fillip to the French that "both the Prince of Wales and Lord Moira were moving Heaven and earth to change the existing system in Ireland and to content the people in order to withdraw them from the French influence." McNevin's letter fell into the hands of Castlereagh, but the reference to the Prince was omitted in the Castlereagh correspondence. An Irish settlement over their heads was never agreeable to English statesmen, who by way of settling Ireland, preferred to excite and crush rebellion before administering the salve of Union to an embitterment which might be symbolised by the relations between the Prince and Princess Caroline.

Coercion was inflicted with the result that the Catholics joined the Presbyterian republican movement, and the Prince wrote again with the scorn of a scorned Cassandra to say "That system was fully and fatally tried in America and failed. The Irish are a brave and high-spirited people and more numerous than the Americans were at the commencement of hostilities." Conciliation was not to be. The Rebellion came, and the Prince pleaded on behalf of Lord Edward Fitzgerald "to obtain an impartial trial by delaying it till his health shall be so recruited as to enable him to go through the awful scene with fortitude." Then the years passed until 1821, when Castlereagh accompanied the King on his pacificatory visit to Ireland, and bitter as Irishmen must have felt to the statesman, who destroyed their corrupt but amusing Parliament, the feelings of Castlereagh to Ireland remain inscrutable to the historian. It is known that Grattan gave him credit for loving Ireland, and it is less known that by his interest in the Celtic Society Castlereagh was an early saviour of the Irish language.

The King felt a romantic attachment for the country which had given him Sheridan and McMahon and Lady Jersey and Lady Conyngham. Before he reached Dublin he received word of the Queen's death. As Byron accurately wrote,

> "Ere the daughter of Brunswick is cold in her grave
> Lo, George the triumphant speeds over the wave!"

News of Napoleon's death arrived a few days before the Irish visit, but there is no evidence for the story that the King, when told that his greatest enemy was dead, naïvely answered "Is she ?"

The King was never a hypocrite, and not only was scarcely persuaded to wear crape, but became "gayer than it might be proper to tell." Caroline had been a wasp in her lifetime, and remained his worm after death. She might be considered his uncrowned Queen, but she had neither been his sweetheart nor his real wife. Ireland had brought him luck, and when Castlereagh inadvertently read aloud a letter to say that "the Duke of York is in despair at an event which so much diminishes his chance to the throne," the King laughed out right royally. It was his birthday when he reached Dunleary, destined to remain Kingstown in his honour for just a century. On arrival at the Viceregal Lodge he made one of those speeches, which neither the ingenuity of an enemy nor the servility of a friend could have devised; "This is one of the *happiest* moments of my life. I feel pleased, being the first of my family that set foot on Irish ground. Early in my life I loved Ireland. My heart was always with them," etc. There was truth in these words. As Prince he had sympathised with Irish and Catholic claims. He had tried to save Lord Edward Fitzgerald, who had had a place in Mrs. Fitzherbert's heart, and he had recently repealed Lord Edward's forfeiture, "a very noble piece of principality" to Byron's mind, who hailed him in a sonnet beginning:

> "To be the father of the fatherless,
> To stretch the hand from the throne's height and raise
> His offspring, who expired in other days
> To make thy sire's sway by a kingdom less."

The King had every reason for believing afterwards "that my presence in Ireland has been productive of very beneficial results." The rumour of Catholic Emancipation had filled the sympathetic air.

Ireland went delirious. The Irish and the King found themselves in sympathetic relations. They drank, sang and play-

acted to each other. When Addington, now Lord Sidmouth, expressed wonder at the loyalty of a recently rebellious people, the King replied, "No, not at all! Their former character must have been caused by misrule." At a banquet he frankly said to the Irish gentry, who had sold their Parliament; "You all committed a great mistake; you should have made terms as the Scotch did." There was a political truce. The Protestants omitted to celebrate the Battle of the Boyne, and O'Connell presented a laurel crown to the King on his knees and proposed building a royal mansion in Ireland. "They clawed and pawed him all over and called him His *Ethereal* Majesty," wrote Lady Glengall, who summed the visit as "palaces in the air and drunkards under the table." But Castlereagh wrote, "I have not seen a drunken man in the streets. I have not heard an unkind word." The King shook hands with a fellow who climbed upon his coach whereat the loyal cry; "Here is the hand that will never be washed!" The entry into Dublin was the greatest personal triumph of the King's life. He was attended by a hundred carriages and by a thousand gentlemen on horseback. Dublin remembered her Latin, and the great arch over Sackville Street bore the Virgilian line;

> HIC EST TIBI QUEM PROMITTI SÆPIUS AUDIS
> AUGUSTUS.

In spite of Court mourning the King wore a bright blue coat with brass buttons, and pointed proudly to his shamrock under the nervous eyes of Castlereagh. He gave the Patrick to the great Irish Lords and received an address from the Catholic Bishops, which was milk and water until a Protestant Peer, to whom they submitted it, introduced a little punch. The King was happy at last. While the Admiralty Yacht took Princess Augusta to Ostend, the Royal Yacht fetched Lady Conyngham, who provided him with a delightful excursion to Slane. It was his only country visit except to Powerscourt, although Lords Belmore and Massereene furnished suites in their Castles. The beautiful Lady Massereene expressed a romantic attachment for the King in a tapestry combining the

Massareene Mermaid with the white Horse of Hanover. The King was in his best humour, and when a number of ladies arrived late at the Castle, he took the trouble to resume his dress for their eyes. But at heart he was fretting at the contrast between "the triumph of Dublin and the horrors of London." What spirit of Dramatic Irony staged those processions! While Dublin was gay with the cavalcade of the gentry of Ireland and the streets echoed the blazonry of a royal welcome, the rain-sodden coffin of Caroline was being hurried by scuffling soldiers past an exasperated crowd and barricades. On August 17 the King entered Dublin, and three days later the Macabre Hussars carried the injured one into the Mausoleum of Brunswick uninjurable for ever. It is true that Death made one tempestuous effort to square matters and to reunite the King and Queen, for the King was all but wrecked on the return trip from Ireland, as he wrote to Knighton; "We lost the tiller and the vessel was for some minutes down on her beam-ends. The oldest and most experienced of our sailors were petrified and paralysed. Everyone almost flew up in their shirts upon deck in terrors that are not to be described."

But the King of Terrors having shown his hand, laughed in the gale and passed on. According to Lady Harcourt the King's "pious acknowledgment for his great escape was quite edifying, and the very great change in his religious feeling all owing to Lady Conyngham."

The King was often being represented as an intoxicated tourist, but he had a desire to share in making policy at home and abroad. Ireland saluted if not settled, he turned his attention to John Bull's other Kingdom, Hanover. "For this purpose he was even prepared to separate himself from Lady Conyngham for a short time," observes Professor Webster. Ever since he had brought the Allied Princes and Statesmen together in London, as George Russell wrote, "the Sybarite became a Statesman, whom Machiavelli's Prince might have been proud to call brother." While the King of England was King of Hanover, there were singular advantages for Europe.

England remained unisolated, and as a Continental Power able to check Prussia or France. The Hanoverian people and pastors received George with blubbering loyalty.

At Calais occurred the famous meeting with Beau Brummell who from sartorial exile had written, " He is at length King! Will his past resentments still attach themselves to his crown?" The cause of resentment is disputed. The Beau on one occasion had called for " Mistress " Fitzherbert's carriage or on another asked " Wales " to ring the bell. But they had quarrelled, and Brummell threatened to bring the old King into fashion. England could not hold two such Dandies. The King caught sight of the fallen Beau pale as ashes in the crowd, but even the gift of some favourite snuff brought no summons from the King, who passed over Brummell as he had passed over another equally great in his sphere, Napoleon, leaving him to pass the rest of his twilight life " between Paris and London " in a sense. Knighton described the scenes travelling as " more like a romance than anything," though Lady Conyngham had been left behind. Under the influence of an attack of gout the King abolished the comparative pains of Torture from the law of Hanover. Castlereagh and Metternich were brought together, the Holy Poker of the Roman Empire and the glacial symbol of the Protestant oligarchy. As diplomatists work more easily under feminine atmosphere, the King sent for Princess Lieven to flatter her ancient flame. In consequence Metternich concluded that he had brought England to his own views, while Russia suspected he had become England's factotum. The result of the Hanover trip was to rally a friendly Europe against Russia's unfriendly design on Turkey. Castlereagh was pleased. " For this happy result he gave the King much credit, and the King himself was so pleased " that he promised his personal help at the Conference which was due to take place at Verona. This he only abandoned when Lady Conyngham declined travelling abroad with Lady Castlereagh. Castlereagh's going to the Conference was kept a secret until Master Conyngham released it to " the ladies at the Opera House."

The King and his Minister attracted much attention in the chancelleries. The French Ambassador Chateaubriand reported that Castlereagh's words must be received with extreme precaution as he was the real king and moreover an enemy king. English policy could be summed as separation from continental affairs and humiliation of Russia, always avoiding war. The summer of 1822 drew Castlereagh into an ominous strain. His influence was exerted to prevent the King going abroad. But everybody, King, the Duke of Wellington and the French Ambassador noticed his mental agony. The latter was received in the statesman's dressing-room and treated to some sardonic praise of English razors. When the session of Parliament was mentioned, "either Parliament or I must finish," sighed the Minister.

Castlereagh was responsible for the unpopularity of the King with the Radicals. The reaction which the Government flaunted at home appears to have been recommended abroad, for the French representative was surprised to be advised by Castlereagh "to use all the authority of repression and punishment." The principal bond between England and France was the King's affection for the Bourbon family. Except for a jealousy on the Russian side, the English ministry showed an indifference for France which Chateaubriand was sent to repair. The King was very amenable to Chateaubriand, who recorded two instances of his marvellous memory, once when the King gave a history of French Society—"Only his Christian Majesty could have known it better," and again after dinner when for two hours he retraced the history of the French Restoration. Chateaubriand noted that Castlereagh seemed surprised to find a Royalist who was not an imbecile. The two questions between Chateaubriand and Castlereagh touched the revolted Spanish Colonies and English neutrality towards French interference in Spain. "We are not at all disposed to recognise these revolutionary Governments," said Castlereagh, but Chateaubriand asked if he was sincere. As for Spain, Castlereagh "would not say a word as though fearing that any idea communicated in secret would make him responsible for the

future." The King's view was different, and he was anxious to influence affairs by a personal visit to Paris as he mentioned to Chateaubriand. The Ministry were thoroughly opposed to the King's travels, but Lady Conyngham told Chateaubriand that he would go abroad in spite of them, and Chateaubriand reported that he " has a will upon which Ministers often have no power."

The King instead of appearing with Castlereagh as " the Two Gentlemen of Verona " took a trip to Scotland, which became the scene of incredible scenes. A guinea was offered and refused for the empty bottle out of which the first royal health was drunk. Scotland forgot herself, while Sir Walter Scott wrote ballads and marshalled pipers and marischals in the King's honour. Holyrood was turned into a Waverley novel. The King wore the Stuart tartan, and by a surer touch knighted Scotland's first and only great painter Raeburn. As in the Irish visit the previous year Death and Tempest were attracted to play a part in the celebrations. Owing to the storm the King kept his sixtieth birthday at sea. On the same day the lonely gonfalonier of English foreign policy released himself from toil.

Castlereagh was dead, and the King could now become the most unpopular man in the Kingdom. Castlereagh was no petty reactionary like Sidmouth at home. He threatened all European democracy or demagogy. He had remonstrated with the French Government for holding a hand to their own Liberals, and recorded anxiety lest the Prussian Army might have become inoculated with " very free notions of Government." At home he was not loved nor feared, and the crowd who only know love or fear towards their great men heaped him with the rancorous unpopularity merited by the whole Cabinet. But on the European horizon he had hung like an icy constellation between the stars of Alexander and Metternich.

The King was horrified but not surprised to hear that Castlereagh had cut his throat. " I know you are come to tell me Castlereagh is dead," were his words. Castlereagh had apparently never received the King's last letter begging him not to hurry abroad, and to " remember of what importance your

health is to the country but above all things to me." The King wrote to the Premier that the agony of his own mind was lost in amazement, which had been its state after the death of Fox, but he added a postscript to hold up the blue riband of the deceased which he intended to give Yarmouth. Sir Walter Scott was equally moved and recorded that Castlereagh was one of two suicides, both of whom had vouched an apparition to him. While the King held levee of the clans, Castlereagh was being buried in the Abbey amid the democratic cat-yells which honoured his lonely grandeur more than Tory tears. Castlereagh and the King had measured each other. "Sir," said that doomed statesman at their last interview, "it is necessary to say good-bye to Europe. You and I alone know it and have saved it." Through his Hanoverian diplomatists the King knew Europe better than the English Cabinet. Castlereagh knew Europe better than any except Metternich, to whom he had presciently written, "I have received his Majesty's commands (should no unforeseen event arise) to set out about the 15th for Vienna." . . . To be precise the unforeseen occurred on the 12th, and the Chancelleries of Europe trembled to an emotion which is rare in the veins of the diplomatic, vacuous bewilderment. Metternich held his breath and Chateaubriand cried *Pourquoi ?* Why indeed ? for the deceased had neither passions nor misfortunes, and seemed more strongly entrenched than ever. However, "Providence ordered otherwise, and Lord Castlereagh followed the Duke of Richelieu. His defects became qualities at a period when exaggeration and democracy menace the world," soliloquised French Diplomacy.

The King must have been moved by the catastrophies or ill-luck which seemed to attend his birthday, for he had previously transferred his feast day in continental fashion to St. George's Day. For England Castlereagh's death was catastrophic indeed, and for the King a matter of extraordinary constitutional difficulty, since Canning was the only obvious successor.

The King had hated Canning since he had been mixed in the delicate investigations attending the Queen. Princess

Lieven in her famous Diary coolly noted Canning as the Queen's lover, without realising that the foolish and the grotesque do not have lovers, and that the Queen was both. Her acquittal in face of "evidence of time and opportunity" had been a triumph of common sense. However, as a talented diplomatic surveyor and engineer, *la* Lieven was bound to note that the King condescended to be jealous of a Commoner. He had determined to make it impossible for Canning to return to office, so the Tories were served their usual dilemma of bearing with the insistent King or giving way to the expectant Whigs, which spelt "irretrievable ruin" to the Duke of Wellington, who proposed a pretty compromise. If the King would give up Lord Conyngham, whom the religious Liverpool hesitated to make Lord Chamberlain, the Premier would give up Canning. Canning was to be sent to India as Grand Mogul and, at the moment Castlereagh fell upon his own blade, an East Indiaman awaited Canning in the Medway. The King instructed the Premier to "on no account impede the arrangements which are already settled respecting India," but Canning avoided his gilded transportation and awaited Destiny on *terra firma*. Suddenly the mantle of Castlereagh fell upon his shoulders. Destiny was stronger than the King, and Metternich once more drew his breath, though not entirely with relief.

Between Canning and Castlereagh there had always lain a gulf of antithesis, once even unto a fatuous duel. It was said that Castlereagh could not speak without making a friend nor Canning without making an enemy, such was his gladial levity compared to Castlereagh's glacial gravity. Both statesmen were brilliant enough to dispense with Political Economy. Castlereagh showed character, while Canning rather exhibited talents. Castlereagh was the last of the Tory aristocrats, who had made England's history in the course of their careers. Canning was the first of the emotional and clever *novi homines*, who were to make a career out of ruling England. Croker said Canning could not take tea without a stratagem. But whosoever supped with Castlereagh needed the Devil's long spoon. The King preferred Peel, but Peel was

wise enough to prefer Canning, for whom Lady Conyngham took measures. And the Duke saw the need of light cavalry in the heaviest of Cabinets.

Amid tears and resignations Canning succeeded Castlereagh. "A poet succeeded a prosarian," says Halevy. Lady Castlereagh in particular protested and informed history that their famous duel had really concerned the reputation of the hero of Corunna, which George the Third's letter in reply to Castlereagh at the time seems to endorse. However, the King made "the greatest sacrifice of my opinions and feelings in my life" and sent for Canning, whom he informed "that the brightest ornament of his crown is the power of extending grace and favour to a subject who may have incurred his displeasure." Canning replied with droll humility expressing ironical gratitude for "His Majesty's great condescension in specifying the precise period of time at which Mr. Canning had the misfortune to incur His Majesty's displeasure." Chancellor Eldon had been alone in the Cabinet in objecting to Canning, but wriggled back in time to the Woolsack. The Under Secretary at the Foreign Office more consistently resigned, and Canning with a gleam of genius gave the place to Master Conyngham at the ripe age of twenty-five. It was a masterly stroke. Lady Conyngham, who had hinted that the condescension of the King must be met by better behaviour from his Ministers, was charmed, and the King sent Canning his portrait. As the son of an actress Canning was nothing if not dramatic. Sheridan had been kept from the Cabinet as the son of a player, and Canning was suspect both to the King and the Duke because his birth did not entitle him to be a gentleman. It was their only excuse, but in those days of Tory dominion it really mattered. George the Third had advanced it frankly as a reason for refusing a mitre, and George the Fourth wished it to be a reason for excluding from office. The differences between Castlereagh and Canning were too marked. Brougham described Castlereagh's "good manners and bad English." Canning's English at least was perfect, and in the end his charm and wit assured his position. Even the Iron Duke bent to his steel, though not

without curious disloyalty to him as a colleague. Canning soothed the King by declaring but not defining a "liberal compromise" on the Catholic Question. Compromise interested him not as an expedient of safety so much as an exercise in walking the tightrope. To the King's credit he learnt to appreciate Canning, who made his sovereignty like that of Æolus master of the winds of peace or war. The devoted Stapleton in his *George Canning and his Times* confessed that "the King's unfriendly feelings ceased as soon as he became persuaded that Mr. Canning's policy was really advantageous to the nation which he ruled. Nothing could surpass the good faith and kindness which the King manifested in the whole of his conduct towards him."

Such was George in relation to the greater statesmen, who served and surrounded him as Prince or King. His attitude to the constellation of women adorning his life has already been the subject of our study. It is now important to consider him for a moment as a brother, the chief of the Pleiad of royal Dukes so often described and decried, though they performed little more than the functions of a Greek Chorus to the Aristophanic protagonism of their eldest and divinest.

As Prince, Regent or King, George was blessed or troubled by many brethren. Queen Charlotte, though described by Stockmar as "small and crooked with a true mulatto face," produced a magnificent brood of Princes varying from the good looks of the Prince of Wales to the repulsive Cumberland, who resembled a "German felon." York, Kent and Sussex were of herculean stature, not unlike those Giants who are said in Holy Scriptures to have been bred by an infusion of the Sons of God amongst the daughters of men. The coffins of York and Kent were so large that they stuck at the entrance of the Royal Mausoleum, an incident which seems to have impressed Sussex, who insisted on being buried in Kensal Green. Clarence, Gloucester and Cambridge were much less colossal specimens of the House of Brunswick. By a eugenic disaster all the brothers died without perpetuating the male line on the throne. Clarence and Sussex left male issue, which was disqualified for the

PLATE VI.—THE BEST FRIEND IN THE WORLD

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throne. In mediæval days their unions might have been legalised, but it was a principle of the Georgian Court that the union of the House of Brunswick with English women must be shameful. There remained Gloucester, who was weak-minded, and Cambridge, who need not be minded at all.

The brothers were violently criticised, not always deservedly. They were Queen Victoria's "wicked uncles." They were, according to Wellington, "the damnest millstone about the necks of any government that can be imagined. They have insulted two-thirds of the gentlemen of England." And they were Shelley's "Princes, the dregs of their dull race who flow through public scorn."

The royal brothers were more often scandalous than ornamental, but they amused rather than obstructed the country. Some notice of their quaint variety is necessary in any survey of the King their eldest, whom none dreamed for a moment of succeeding until the death of the Princess Charlotte. For ten years subsequent York was the heir and, as the most gentlemanly of the brethren, was said always to comport himself as though the King were not mortal. Unexpectedly at York's death Clarence found himself heir-apparent, and the Whigs began to see their chance of making port. Like the Flying Dutchman the Whigs were to beat about the Cape of Good Hope until "Binnacle Billy" took the bridge. A strange mixture of oddness and obstinacy, he shared some of the views of his liberal brothers, and to his credit he had protested against the attack on Copenhagen.

Clarence impressed the public imagination by his romance with the beautiful and long-suffering Mrs. Jordan. They were devotedly attached, and as the courtly William Jerdan wrote in his *National Portraits*, "happy the husband in all but the ceremonies prescribed by the Church to subjects of the realm in our communion." It was obvious that the insurmountable Royal Marriage Act was considered an excuse for any liaison the royal Dukes undertook. The brothers were loyal to each other. We hear a pleasant touch in a Diary of 1806; "What do you think of the Prince of Wales at the Duke of Clarence's

fête handing out Mrs. Jordan before the Countess of Athlone and the Duchess of Bolton ?"

As the command of the Army had been restored to York by his brother, that of the sea was given to Clarence as an honorary Lord High Admiral, but, as he insisted on carrying out his own private manœuvres, he had to be recalled. He had become heir-apparent after York's death, and the King wrote, " I will leave him the example of what the inherent duty of a King of this country really is."

The career of Royal York was closest to that of the Prince, except that he was always given the military commands which the Prince entreated. Mrs. Clarke evoked no scandal until she was found to be dispensing Commissions in the Army. Under the attacks of Colonel Wardle the Duke was compelled to resign by an adverse vote. The Prince said he would not rise upon his brother's fall, and though unable to vote himself sent his secretary to do so. The first result was that Kent's Madame St. Laurent and Clarence's Mrs. Jordan were expelled from Royal habitations. The Duke was reappointed by his brother as soon as he became King. His great love affair was with the Duchess of Rutland, and Creevey tells how he walked her up and down Kensington Gardens till she was ready to faint from fatigue, " so he ran off puffing and blowing and brought a pony upon which he aired her up and down for two hours longer. When the Regent heard of this he is said to have chuckled with delight exclaiming, ' York is in for it at last.' "

York's career in the field brought to an end the mediæval custom of placing armies under the strategical care of Princes of the Blood. Even so, York believed he had been sacrificed to Wellesley, when he was not given the command in the Peninsula. The towering monument by which he shares with Nelson the pigeon's-eye view of London is a tribute to his achievements at home. He reformed the Army by combining a German solidity that was not mechanical with a French rapidity that was not vivacious. The Army loved him as much as he loved Mrs. Clarke.

York died a jovial Epicurean to the last, observing " I have

enjoyed life but I am not afraid to die." The King ordered him a magnificent funeral, and sat at Windsor listening to the minute guns as though each was a nail driven into his heart. The *Annual Register* proudly recorded that: "In the failings of the Duke there was nothing unEnglish, nothing that was unprincely."

On the death of the Princess Charlotte three of the royal Dukes married into Germany in the hopes of fathering an English sovereign. The Duke of Kent confided the delicacy of his position to Creevey in a famous passage; "The Duke of Clarence demands the payment of all his debts, which are very great, and a handsome provision for each of his ten natural children. The next Prince in succession is myself, and although I trust I shall be at all times ready to obey any call my country may make upon me, God only knows the sacrifice it will be to make whenever I shall think it my duty to become a married man. It is now seven and twenty years since Madame St. Laurent and I have lived together."

So poor Madame St. Laurent was left stranded in Paris, and an appeal to help her was eventually forwarded through Mrs. Fitzherbert from Louis Philippe. Clarence likewise abandoned Mrs. Jordan, who was buried by subscription in Paris. Unfeeling cartoons show her rising from her coffin to trouble the "perjured faithless Clarence."

Meanwhile Kent wrote to Mrs. Fitzherbert, complaining of "that odious Princess Amelia of Baden whom I find the papers have thought fit to give to me. I went to Carlsruhe where I saw the old Madam. But from her being the only one of the six sisters left on hand at the age of forty-one and the eldest too, you may judge how little desirable she is." Grants to the marrying Duchesses were opposed in the Commons. To help matters the Regent gave a display or exhibition of them at Carlton House when an unbiassed spectator in the *Buckingham Papers* reported them "one more ugly than another. I think the manners of the Duchess of Clarence the best and the looks of the Duchess of Kent." Their marriages were quickly celebrated, although the old Queen Charlotte was dying, and by

the same advice " all the Princes are delaying their departure looking out for the plunder from the Queen's death." On the Queen's death York was offered a salary of ten thousand a year to guard the old King, which the Regent compelled him to take saying, when he attempted refusal; " No sir, you want to be popular at our expense !"

Clarence had proposed to heiresses right and left including Miss Tilney Long, who unfortunately was at that time " refusing right and left." His German Princess bore him children but they died. In 1821 there was prospect of a Queen Elizabeth. " It came a little too early," and early it went. The King was much affected, writing to Knighton " for God's sake come down to me to-morrow morning. The melancholy tidings of the almost sudden death of my poor little niece have just reached me and have overset me beyond all I can express." The victory in this strange rivalry went to the Duke of Kent, whose wife bore a long-surviving Princess. Kent expired eight months after the Princess was born and six days before his august father the Third George, whose Will became a matter of dispute between his sons. With great financial difficulty the Kents had reached England in time for their daughter to be born in the temporal rather than the spiritual dominion of the royal House. They were considerably assisted by the chivalrous Alderman Wood, whose baronetcy was significantly the first title conferred in the Victorian era.

The most respectable of the royal Dukes was Sussex, who collected Bibles and pipes, and in politics shared the liberal and semi-Socialist views of Kent. Sussex once convulsed a dinner by proposing as a toast " Respectability to the Crown and Independence to the people !" He was the hero of a romance almost as touching as that of his brother with Mrs. Fitzherbert. While a youth in Rome he distinguished himself by going out of the way to salute the Cardinal Duke of York and by secretly marrying the daughter of the Earl of Dunmore, which marriage he repeated in London at George's Hanover Square. It was a great blow to Mrs. Fitzherbert when the marriage was declared null and void. Like his eldest brother, Sussex seems to have

forced marriage on his bride by plea of his life. The Prince stabbed himself to induce Mrs. Fitzherbert's consent, and Sussex threatened to die of starvation, writing, "by all that is holy till when I am married I will eat nothing." The liberal and broad-minded views of Sussex were creditable to his family and popular in the country, making the greatest contrast to Cumberland. Only the day before Kent died, Sussex attended a dinner in honour of Fox, and replied to critics that he and Kent were equally Whigs.

Cumberland may be regarded as a sinister influence, one of those incarnations which dismay the nervous and respectable, though there was a time when he had hopes of the throne and was reported "going to Church regularly and has left off swearing." The Prince forbade his own daughter to speak to him. He was wrongly suspected of murdering his valet, and Lady Jersey was exaggerating when she said he caused the death of four men. Lord Graves certainly committed suicide on seeing a Caricature of his wife in the Duke's arms. Graves was comptroller of the Duke, but when he realised that his wife also controlled the Duke he took his own life. But the Duke was no coward, and faced the French in the field or the British caricaturist at home with equanimous contempt. The caricature of Lady Graves represented the lady's face hidden, but the Duke was unmistakable and no less the legend entitling him "a violator of graves." Mrs. Fitzherbert writing to Minney Seymour had said, "I suppose you have heard all the scandal respecting the Duke of Cumberland and Lady Graves. I understand Lord Graves gave her a week to consider which she preferred him or the Duke."

Cumberland owed his sinister appearance to the loss of an eye at Tournay, where he lifted a French Dragoon off his horse by sheer strength. He fiercely attacked the Regency Bill in the Prince's support and told the Tories they had a wrong idea of the Prince's character, in which he was proved right two years later when the Prince retained the Tories in office. It was Cumberland's Tory influence which was responsible for George's stronger and stronger Toryism and Protestantism.

It was Cumberland who appealed in the Lords to his " sainted father " against the Catholic Bill, and gave the Duke of Wellington so much trouble that the Duke threatened to turn him out of the country. His influence over the King was that of a limited intellect and a strong will over a weak will coupled to an artistic nature.

Cumberland survived all his brothers, becoming King of Hanover, which he bequeathed with the blindness hereditary in the family to his son George in 1851. His old enemy Wellington, then on the edge of the grave himself, was moved to write extolling the great deeds Cumberland had performed for Germany and the world ! But the days of the Guelph were numbered, and the Fifth George of Hanover was the last of the male line of Brunswick to wear a crown. His dominions were absorbed by Prussia in spite of the heroic and forgotten fight of Langensalza, which, had England still been united with Hanover, might have been one of the deciding battles of the world obviating the imperial strife that broke between Prussia and England fifty years later.

# LADY CONYNGHAM

For all practical purposes Lady Conyngham became Queen of England. Her predecessors were swept into Time's dust-box and she remained unsoured, unthreatened by rivalry. Successively and successfully she gave the *coup-de-grâce* to Lady Jersey and Lady Hertford.

The King's first dinner with a subject was at Devonshire House, and the *Buckingham Papers* tell how the Duke, "wrote to Lady Jersey to beg her to send him an excuse as he had reason to think her presence would be objectionable. Lady Jersey is outrageous but has written a most violent letter to the Duke. Lady Conyngham carries it with the highest hand." Poor Lady Jersey, rather wisely, had died a few days before the Coronation. The King's love-letters to her were burnt by Lord Clarendon in the presence of her son, which Creevey thought "very genteel but damned provoking that such capital material for the instruction and improvement of men and women should be eternally lost."

Lady Hertford showed more fight, and Lady Conyngham waited a year before delivering the knock-out, which arrived when Lady Hertford somewhat recklessly omitted Lady Conyngham among the patronesses of the Hibernian Ball. Unfortunately Lady Conyngham was an Irish Peeress and started an opposition Ball, in the list for which the King's name but not that of Lady Hertford appeared. Lady Hertford withdrew from Court.

French Diplomacy reported that it is "certain that the Marchioness of Conyngham without conveying a great political influence has actually taken the empire so long exerted by the Marchioness of Hertford." The deposed Marchioness, however, "retained great dignity in her disgrace."

A divine sense of justice permitted Mrs. Fitzherbert to witness the final state of her old rival at Brighton in 1824, and she wrote to Minney Seymour, "Lady Hertford left this place some days ago. She inhabited one of the largest houses here, but was quite alone and nobody saw her. She sent to

Mrs. de Crespigny to ask her to tea, but that great lady sent an excuse saying she had Colonel Whalley and Mr. Wall with her and could not have that honour. Think of Lady Hertford making up to Mrs. de Crespigny !" How indeed were the mighty fallen !

At the funeral of George the Third Croker had noted the deathlike appearance of Lord Hertford tottering before the coffin. He symbolised the passing of his lady's ascendance upon the next King. The rise of Lady Conyngham was further reported to the foreign Chancelleries, where these matters receive that proper importance, which is considered improper in England. Metternich was informed that the King had reduced his weight by thirty pounds in view of Lady Conyngham's figure. More interesting politically was the quarrel between Lady Conyngham and Lady Castlereagh, who scolded the King for jilting her relative Lady Hertford. In vain was Lady Castlereagh to wear her husband's jewelled Garter in her hair, for Lady Conyngham hoisted the famous sapphire, once treasured at Glastonbury and recently returned to the Crown by the Cardinal Royal of York. Metternich was assured that " these two women never speak and as one is always in the intimacy of the King and the other never, as a result her husband almost never," and concluded Castlereagh's stock was down. As a matter of fact, during the spring and summer of 1821 the King was too bored or worried to ask any Ministers to dine, but a select diplomatic body were invited to the Windsor Cottage to amuse the King and Lady Conyngham, whose position was regulated by making her Lady Steward, a sort of " Grand Chambermaid." This was the famous *Coterie*—the Lievens from Russia, Prince Esterhazy, the Austrian Ambassador—with various ducal eligibles for Lady Conyngham's daughters. At that time the cleverest member of the diplomatic body was Princess Lieven, but perhaps feminine jealousy pervaded her description of Lady Conyngham as " preoccupied with religious questions. She had no political ideas nor opinions, no intimate relation to society, dominated by the strongest leaning towards diamonds and money, after this

towards love or fashion. She pleased and suited the King."

French Diplomacy sent home a more balanced sketch in 1821; " the King's preference for Lady Conyngham lent itself to ridicule and blame. The age, rank and qualities of Lady Hertford, the services she had rendered to the Prince and perhaps to the State lent almost a grave character to the attachment which he showed her. But Lady Conyngham, placed by her connections in a different line of politics from that, which the King proposes to follow, has only the remains of beauty to justify the preference of the King, and the Cabinet has perhaps the right to be alarmed at an influence, which can compromise its credit if not menace its existence."

Lady Conyngham proved far from stupid and not unbeneficial. The King's health and temper demanded her constant and unflagging attention. She sacrificed her time to his mingled gout and gush. Passion and even love she forgot, when she accepted the odium without the reality of being the King's mistress. He adored her with the childishness of the elderly. She was elderly too. Certainly the King never changed again, but the odium was considerable and constant. The caricaturists have stereotyped a character Lady Conyngham hardly deserved.

As for Spite's imagery, she was represented as a Bird of Paradise roosting beside an eagle; as a juggler balancing the Crown and Sceptre on the tip of her nose; as the mare in the shafts of the King's cab; using the Crown as her pincushion; riding the royal Giraffe with the King; blindfolding the King while the Duke burked the Constitution; stroking the Royal Barge steered by the Duke; as a recruiting drummer; as a silver crown piece, a doll, an oyster—and worse!

The vexations of her life were not limited to public misrepresentation. She discovered that she had entered a gilded prison, having to play *Patience* with the impatient King at night and listen to that " greatest master of gossip in the world " all day, as Greville titled him. Noted Greville also that " she looks bored to death and she never speaks, never

appears to have one word to say to the King, who however talks without ceasing." When she became "very restless and impatient," Lord Lauderdale soothed her by telling her in blunt metaphor that having made her bed she must lie there. In the middle of her reign she withdrew on the excuse of illness, and the *Buckingham Papers* recorded (February 25, 1825) "the King still in his bed, sulky, out of humour. Lady Conyngham is not gone back. I think it worth while for his Ministers to lay a petition before her."

While dismissals and promotions may be attributed to her, it is pleasant to trace her influence as well as the King's humanity in some of the legislation forbidding, for instance, the whipping of women (1 Geo. IV, *c.* 57), cruelty to horses and cattle (3 Geo. IV, *c.* 71), or the use of mantraps in game preserves (8 Geo. IV, *c.* 18). In 1823 we find Lady Conyngham and the King compiling a letter to Peel to save a condemned criminal from the gallows. Following Romilly and Mackintosh, Peel softened the penal code. At Lancaster Assizes in 1827 the King commuted 28 death sentences.

Court and public were impitiable to Lady Conyngham. It is interesting to quote a suppressed page from Lady Charlotte Bury's Diary; "Lady Conyngham has completely gained the summit of her ambition, and has all the honours paid her of the Royal Mistress. Did you ever happen to hear that she once openly declared she would arrive at that goal one day or another? To be anyone's mistress is a miserable lot. To be a royal man's mistress worse still, for how seldom is a Prince constant! There are so many trials for the disgraceful distinction of his admiration! so many circumstances of state policy, which may oblige him to cast the person he loves away from him; besides the caprice natural to every human body, but pre-eminent in royal persons with a very few exceptions that renders the favoured lady of a Prince liable to be dismissed the presence any day. I wonder the remembrance of *La Vallière* never crosses the mind of a woman, who seeks for unhallowed and joyless love; nay Lady Conyngham need only behold Mrs. Fitzherbert and Lady Hertford and tremble lest

PLATE VII.—A KINGFISHER (LADY CONYNGHAM AND GEORGE IV.)

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such should be her own fate." Any such trembling became part of the fate of the King. There was no reason not to believe that Peter Pindar had accurately judged

"the Royal taste
Like Dame Fitzherbert, old and chaste."

In any case Lady Conyngham corrected whatever appeared incorrect in her position by bringing her whole family to Court. Lord Conyngham was made a Marquis, and Creevey noted (September, 1820) "the King is intent upon turning out Lord Hertford to make room for Conyngham as Lord Chamberlain." Greville says that she rode with her daughter but not with the King, whom she refused to embarrass in public. On first seeing her riding the royal horses a relation of Lady Hertford said, "If we cannot teach our grandmother to ride, all is over with us!" The King generally took mother and daughter in to dinner together and divided his presents between them. He told her at Brighton to show herself mistress of the Pavilion. Master Frank Conyngham was made Master of the Robes, but his elder brother, Lord Mount Charles, was rumoured restive at his mother's position, and the King took extraordinary care to conciliate his filial feelings by writing a most private and confidential letter to Wellesley, although "with difficulty and in pain" to secure him the command of the Clare Militia. (May 4, 1822) "This is on many accounts very desirable and a great object to the family and your difficulty, if any should arrive, will be immediately got rid of, because it is the natural promotion and therefore an act of justice. Let me add to this also, should it be necessary that you are at liberty to state that it is my particular desire."

The gratifications afforded to the Conyngham family were not serious. But the Crown and the favourite of the Crown made themselves felt in offices of State, the King's individual prejudices being generally insurmountable. Her ladyship also had whims. In the *Colchester Diary* the Chancellor complains during 1826 that "since Lady Conyngham was at Windsor he had never been suffered to enter those gates once except

during her absence." The real stumbling-block came with Lady Conyngham's interference in the Church. She was deeply religious, and the famous preacher Irving once made a great hit on her by referring to "heavenly Pavilions" in the next world. Religious feelings prompted rather than prevented her accompanying the King to the Chapel Royal, which came under Lord Conyngham's chaperonage as Lord Chamberlain. In a day not made for peace Lady Conyngham set eyes upon a Bishopric, and the King was agreeable. Now Bishoprics are the perquisite of the King's Ministry not of his Mistress, as the public believed Lady Conyngham to be. Perhaps, if their liaison had been juvenile and passionate, she would not have imperilled her position by such a demand. But she was neither young nor happy, at best her admirer being an influential invalid.

The Ministry trembled when Lady Conyngham wished her family tutor Mr. Sumner to be elevated to a Bishopric. Pitt, it was true, had made his tutor Bishop of Lincoln, and mitres had rewarded all the royal pedagogues. But the Evangelical Conscience in Lord Liverpool revolted, and the claims of Mr. Sumner could only be met by a Windsor Canonry. At one time it was a question whether the King's Ministry or the ministry of Mr. Sumner would prevail. Later the King obtained his advancement to the Sees of Llandaff and Winchester on the excellent grounds that he was a gentleman such as the King desired to attend his own deathbed. His mitre marked the power of the Conyngham influence, but Mr. Sumner proved the model of Nineteenth-Century Bishops. The delicate purposes of Providence can often be fulfilled by means which the jealousy of men may scorn as indelicate. The King had been less fortunate in his interference in the Irish Episcopate. When the See of Clogher fell vacant in 1815, there were two candidates. The Bishop of Ferns was backed by Lord Ely, and the more local Bishop of Dromore was recommended by Blomfield. The Regent secured it for Lord Roden's brother, who in 1822 forfeited his spiritual office for a curacy in the Cities of the Plain. As Wellesley wrote to Liverpool (August 4,

1822): "The approaching vacancy of the See of Clogher, notwithstanding the gross indelicacy of the subject, has already produced an application from Warburton, the well-known Bishop of Cloyne, and from the Marquess of Ely in favour of his brother the Bishop of Ferns. Lord Ely states a positive promise made to his Lordship which he says was interrupted by His Majesty's intervention in favour of Dr. Percy Jocelyn the present Bishop of Clogher."

This scandal may account for the much criticised sentence of the King to Liverpool in that year; "I cannot reconcile myself to have the Primacy of Ireland filled with an Irishman, for let us not forget the particular circumstances in which we are at present placed." As Regent he had made a Scotch Stuart Archbishop of Armagh in the same arbitrary fashion that he announced to Manners Sutton his accession to Canterbury. While the constitutional tendency of the time gathered the royal patronage into the Premier's hands, the King clung to his only possible prerogative as Defender of the Faith.

The appointment of Sumner was not the only stroke attributed to Lady Conyngham. The dismissal of Blomfield, for twenty-four years the King's Secretary, was connected with his refusal to cater Lady Conyngham's diamonds out of the Privy Purse. Blomfield was made a Peer and sent to Stockholm to avoid inconvenient inquiry, the diplomatists were told, while his place was more than filled by Sir William Knighton, who was wise to make alliance with her Ladyship. Her political influence was not undetermined. According to the *Buckingham Papers* she supported the Catholic Bill, "which is a great thing," and held her lily-white hand to the Lords of the Opposition. By June, 1821, we learn that "Lord and Lady Grey are invited to the Carlton House Ball. If it is so, nothing can more strongly mark her influence," whereas "the King only plays a game with the Opposition from vexation and anger about Mr. Sumner's appointment." Lady Conyngham explains the comment of the following year; "the conduct of the King is inexplicable. He is praising Lord Liverpool on all occasions, but sending invitations to nothing but the Opposition." The

sifting of the Whigs from the Radicals was essential to the Whigs' return, and depended on the tact of Lady Conyngham, especially as there were Opposition leaders to whom the King's presence was utterly denied. There was, however, one ostracised member of the Government, to whom the King had restored the light of his countenance and permitted to assume the policy if not the power of Castlereagh, George Canning.

Within forty-eight hours of Canning's accession to the Foreign Office Wellington was carrying the bombshell to the Congress at Verona that, however much Spain revolted from Ferdinand, England would not interfere. France interfered, however, although Chateaubriand, the friend of Canning, had succeeded to the French Foreign Affairs. France set a sanitary belt of troops between herself and debourbonising Spain. The French Bourbons were restoring their ilk in Spain, and the King of England incautiously told Marcellus, the French representative, that he wished his master success with all his heart. The phrase reached *The Times*, which castigated the one-time disciple of Charles James Fox, but the King wittily said he was now a Royalist by trade and scorned the " shameful uncertainty " of his Cabinet. When France advanced successfully in Spain, and Canning spoke of England being within a hair's-breadth of war, it was the King's outspoken opinions which perhaps prevented England exceeding that hair's-breadth. The Czar, in spite of their secret antipathy, congratulated the King on his " noble sentiments." The King told Marcellus (July 10, 1823), " Things are much changed since we saw each other. All goes marvellously well with you. I foretold it and I rejoice as you do. They say that Ferdinand has taken at Cadiz the Ministers who deposed him at Seville, a weakness I shall never imitate. They wished to pass me as mad lately, but I told Lord Liverpool to take care. If my Ministers declared me mad, I might take back my senses but not my Ministers." Later the King laughingly asked Canning of what he was speaking to Marcellus. " Of the excellence of representative government," was the reply, " and of the forced labour in the House of Commons. Marcellus can be an orator at home, but

he is a listener here." "I know," interrupted the King, "you have had to listen to painful stuff this year, and I condole with you that you had your mouth tied or you would have given Parliament a fine reply." "Sire," replied Marcellus, "when calm comes, the sailor forgets the storm."

The King still speaking excellent French broke into a tirade; "Don't be carried away by our system of government. If there are advantages, there are disadvantages. I have never forgotten what a witty king once said to me—Your English government is only good for protecting adventurers (*coquins*) and intimidating honest men!" Canning, always considered witty but sometimes referred to as adventurous, remained silent under this thrust. The King continued, "We are still alone in our kind of government, and for the happiness of the world we ought not to wish our institutions upon any other people. What is good for us would be worthless for others. Every ground does not bear the same fruit or the same mineral. It is the same with the characters and morals of nations. Remember this as my unalterable opinion."

As Marcellus took careful notes, we have a clear insight into the King's policy, that the Bourbon cause should have the support of the English King. But his policy entailed a Franco-English friendship, which he called "*une bonne intelligence*." He therefore congratulated the new Ambassador Polignac on the success of the French arms in Spain as strengthening the Legitimist cause in France herself, adding (February, 1824): "I do not inquire into reasons for England's conduct in the late events. My good intentions for the consolidation of the throne of the Bourbons were well known. At an unhappy time those faithful to the Royal Cause of France received fraternal welcome here," and he complained of a play given by the Anglophobe Duchess de Berri to ridicule the English. Lord Francis Conyngham whispered to Polignac that the English Ambassador had confidentially informed Canning, who had seized the chance to throw a little fly into the King's Legitimist ointment, knowing the King's sensitiveness to the ridiculous.

The King aimed at an agreement with the country which Pitt

had termed England's natural enemy. Whether England was anti-Revolutionary or anti-Bourbon, George as Prince or Regent had been consistently friendly to France. A curious fatality showed itself between the two Royal Houses. On the day that the Third George was buried, the Duke de Berri was assassinated (February 13, 1820). The Duke of York later was buried on the day of anniversary of Louis XVI.'s execution. And the death of the Fourth George was to be the signal for the overthrow of the Bourbons for good. However, he received the Princes of France both before and after their restoration with every sign of favour, and the French appreciated his tact and his graciousness, qualities which together with his jealous dignity made him seem like a Grand Monarque in Parisian eyes.

French diplomacy was less admiring of the King's Ministers. Castlereagh had been found *measuré*, but Canning was now thought *passioné*. Canning had begun to impose a *Pax Britannica* upon Europe. He was willing to relinquish a policy of glory and ruin to France, while England's peaceful prosperity provided a background to his epigrams. He was an adroit fencer, an uncertain theorist, but a brilliant practitioner. Democracy he qualified as walking on the razor's edge, but he managed to be mistaken for a Carbonaro on the Continent. He proceeded to teach democracy to the reactionary and monarchical principles of the republican, and his patronage of arts and letters delighted the King, however little approving his policy.

Canning was one who knew how to wait. He learnt from Polignac of the event in Spain with the greatest calm, and told him that Conferences were useless or dangerous; useless, if the Powers were in accord, and dangerous if they were not. He had decided to cut adrift from Europe. Strange to say, he was learning from his agents that the Duke of Wellington was more dangerous behind his back than the King. The Duke was in secret correspondence with Austria, whose representative wrote " fortunately we have the Duke of Wellington." It was treachery to Canning, but not to the King, who was aware

of the Duke's attitude. An omitted passage in the Duke's correspondence shows that he thought Canning distorted facts and entrapped the consent of the Cabinet. The only excuse for the Duke was that he did not think Canning a gentleman. It was typical of the King that Canning was not invited to the Cottage, where the great game of diplomacy was played in terms of feminine finesse. There were great women-players in Europe, Madame de Krudener behind the Czar, Madame de Caylus at Versailles and Lady Conyngham at Windsor. Greatest was Princess Lieven, whose drawn face, wrung neck and flap-ears apparently caused no jealousy to Lady Conyngham. *La* Lieven had replaced her affair with Metternich by what Lady Stuart de Rothesay called "a holy flirtation" (*o si sic omnes!*) with Grey. Canning immediately saw the wisdom of making her into a friend if he was to draw Russia from Austria and split the Holy Alliance.

Canning had been crossed in Europe when Spain had been debourbonised, and in a splendid moment of antithesis he decided to recognise the revolted Spanish Colonies by calling the New World to redress the balance of the Old. The King was furious at the slight upon Monarchy, and privately sent Westmoreland to reassure the new French King Charles the Tenth. Canning in future referred to Westmoreland, who was Privy Seal, as the *sot privé!* The King he overawed by talking of a popular movement at home, and made the hostile Duke admit that the French Bourbon had advised the English Cabinet against recognition. Under the circumstances the King "consents but does not concur." The King rather cleverly asked how the Cabinet proposed to prosecute O'Connell in Ireland while making a treaty with Bolivar in South America, which amused Canning as much as he was angered with Metternich's ironical offer of Austrian troops to suppress Irish revolt. Canning had galled him by asking why the Legitimists of the Holy Alliance kept a Bernadotte on the Swedish throne while the Fourth Gustavus trailed ragged claims through Europe. It was diamond cut diamond, for the Great War had been fought to save Europe from Democracy and its despotic aftermath.

Canning proposed fair play for small nations with Ireland excepted. The King had unfortunately forgotten his princely enthusiasm for a country which he had treated rather as he had treated Mrs. Fitzherbert.

But the time came for the King to measure Canning, and Knighton was sent to surrender the Cottage Coterie and all their works. Canning mentioned that he was informed the King's talk was transmitted to Metternich, whereat Knighton ventured to congratulate him on his South American policy. Canning, who had not done more than restore a balance of Trade, replied that he wished to place the King at the head of Europe instead of being reckoned fifth in a Confederacy. So the King began to realise that under Canning's glittering guidance he was cutting a figure in the world. He could afford to become constitutional, when served by such servants of the Constitution. He advised Metternich accordingly that Canning " has shown great talents, much cleverness and is one of the most active and vigorous members of my government." All of which Metternich knew already.

One good turn deserves another, and the exchange of Envoys with the South American Republics enabled Canning to exile diplomatically Lord Ponsonby, who had been loved by Lady Conyngham. During the Revolution French women had cut down the beautiful Ponsonby from *la lanterne* to become the bone of contention between Ladies Jersey and Conyngham. His return naturally consternated the King. Canning wrote about him; " It is very difficult for me to say, Be as little in England as possible before your departure. There are wherefores which I cannot explain." Hurried into a new berth, the good Ponsonby was " extremely proud of being approved " by Canning, but the Foreign Office soon received angry plaints from Buenos Ayres that in the hurry the British Envoy had lost all his " black neckcloths." It was, perhaps, not the first time his good looks had stranded him with his neck bare !

Canning further pleased the King by postponing the Catholic Question, and received sympathetic word that the King would receive the Ministers of the New American States, who were

building their Constitutions according to the textbooks of Bentham. As yet only the Columbian envoy was ready. The King received him with special mention of the State more immediately under his protection, Brazil, which Canning had separated from England's constant ally Portugal. Brazil was Canning's favourite, as it balanced the new Republics with an Imperialism which was clothed in a real rose-red robe of toucan feathers. To Esterhazy saying farewell the King proudly pointed out that " when we see our way and can employ our own influence, we can do anything. Who can have done what we have just accomplished in Brazil ?"

As King, George was a very different politician to George Prince of Wales. As Prince he was a Whig with an adventurous tinge of Liberalism. As Regent, he became a reactionary and an obstinate Protestant Tory. As King under the influence of his great Ministers, he unwillingly became a constitutional monarch and set the standard of compromise which has since canopied the Throne. Of his three great Ministers, Castlereagh weaned him from the Holy Alliance and the rigid legitimism of Russia and Austria. In time Castlereagh would have brought him to emancipate Catholics. Nearly five years after his death the King sent a memorandum to the Cabinet suggesting they had departed from the policy of Castlereagh, and asking for individual answers to the question whether they had abandoned the great principles of 1814, 1815 and 1818 ? The amused Ministers were too wary to enter the trap. Canning postponed the Catholic Question, but won the King to constitutional behaviour, while the Duke eventually secured Catholic Relief from his protesting pen. The King learnt by hard experience lessons which his successors consequently never needed teaching.

The riots and rick-burning, the murder of the Duke de Berri, and an attempt on his own life made him anti-revolutionist. He was convinced of general plots against monarchs, and he told Esterhazy that he had been warned from Paris for his own life.

The King settled down to crusty Toryism, for he did not see that extended suffrage and reform were likely to produce better

results than the old corrupt and limited system. Of Political Economy he was as ignorant as his ministers, if we may judge from the King's Speech in 1823, when the pious hope was expressed that, if manufacturers became prosperous, agriculturists would not be made miserable. The great questions of Free Trade and Free Birth associated with Adam Smith and Malthus had been broached. But neither then nor since have they found settlement.

England's foreign policy tended to encourage revolution abroad, which clashed with the King's position as a despot in Hanover. His British Ambassadors represented him as the patron of Constitutions, while his Hanoverian Envoys were allowed to form the impression that their master was an autocrat. The Envoy at Paris confessed "that the twofold character of our gracious Monarch has often excited in me doubt and perplexity." To add to the confusion, the Hanoverian Minister, Count Münster, was under Metternich's influence, while the policy of Hanover was reserved to the King. It gave the King a handle and a knowledge to continental politics, which rather baffled the British Cabinet, but he allowed it to work both ways, and Canning had written gratefully concerning the interference in Portugal; "The King was advised by H.M.'s confidential servants to refer to his Government in Hanover the question of the possibility of promoting the required aid in that kingdom, and H.M. was pleased to act upon this advice." About this time the King informed Esterhazy that he was no longer a continual ruler, and that, though Canning had done evil, he could not get rid of him. Canning was delighted to find that "the King of late has directed Münster to communicate to me all the Hanoverian correspondence," but what was his pleasure on reading in a despatch of Münster to Paris that the Spanish King "by errors of the first magnitude had almost compelled his subject to revolt!"

The King even resented the way the Duke opposed Canning. What were Esterhazy's conclusions when the Duke revealed a diplomatic secret to Austria, and the King told him that his personal friendship for the Duke was over for ever?

In fact Metternich thought that Canning like Castlereagh only opposed the Holy Alliance by way of throwing formal dust into the eyes of Parliament. But Canning apparently was genuine in his Constitutionalism all round. The inscrutable Metternich was so puzzled that to make sure of his bearings he felt constrained to read the despatches of the British Ambassador before they left Vienna! Castlereagh had thought Metternich a "political harlequin," and the Duke dubbed him a "society hero," but Canning realised that he incarnated all that was left abroad of an iron it was England's isolated advantage to dissolve.

In three years Canning established English in place of French influence. England fantastically claimed to fix the future relations of the Old and the New Hemisphere, though really to establish new ports for old trades. French laurels had been sterilised in Spain and the Continental Alliance stricken dead, while English diplomatists issued the impotent regrets of undertakers. To meet the French flag at Cadiz the British flag waved at Lisbon, and her private alliance was tending toward Petersbourg. Polignac summarised matters, "She reigns everywhere. She dominates events."

It would have been easy for the King to have worried and neglected Canning, but he liked and backed him, though he intrigued with the Duke against him, even unto giving the iron one a tearful kiss. But equally he played Canning against the Duke, who found him a marvellous compound of virtues and deficiencies with perhaps the good elements preponderating. He went out of his way to help Canning, whose College friend Charles Ellis he raised to the Peerage out of sheer good will, Greville noting that "everybody cries out against Charles Ellis' Peerage: is of no family." Ellis himself wrote, "It is impossible to describe the kindness of the King on this occasion. If H.M. had been at Christ Church with us he could not have entered more cordially into all my feelings. Everything since Christ Church H.M. seemed to know as well as myself."

He was always amused at Canning's awkward manners, according to Princess Lieven, who noted "nothing escaped the

King's very delicate tact." *La* Lieven was pleased to leave a sketch of the King to posterity, which may be quoted among the gems in her Diary; "George IV. had some amiable qualities. Unquestionably he had some wit and great penetration; he quickly summed up persons and things. He was educated and had much tact, easy, animated and varied conversation, not at all pedantic. He adorned the subjects he touched, he knew how to listen, he was very polished. For my part I had never known a person like him, who was also affectionate, sympathetic and gallant. But he was full of vanity and could be flattered at will. Weary of all the joys of life, having only taste, not one true sentiment, he was hardly susceptible to attachment, and never I believe sincerely inspired anyone with it. He was not a bad man, but was capable of bad actions. No one trusted him, none of his ministers had confidence in him nor could they much respect his wishes, for it was easy to make him change them."

There are many instances of his diplomatic acumen. The Canning-Bagot papers give an instance of his chess-play. Given Clancarty as Ambassador at The Hague and Fagel as Dutch envoy to London; given also the disagreeable King of the Netherlands, with a desire to reduce his Embassy; "His Majesty," reported Canning, "whose sagacity you know, was instantly struck with the probability that the recall of Fagel on the discontinuance of the Embassy was a device to get rid of Clancarty. H.M. at once offered to write himself to Clancarty to advise him to resign. He saw that the King of the Netherlands was resolved to get rid of him and, rather than the Embassy should be lost in the scuffle, he would himself suggest to Clancarty the propriety of removing himself." Wheels within wheels always interested the King.

When he was not interested, he expected to be amused by his Ministers. Possibly he amused them in turn, but he felt no particular duty to be loyal to them, except when his Constitutional pride or personal friendship was evoked. He described his relations with Canning humorously in the words, "we fight and sometimes I beat him." He complained

that the Duke always acted and spoke as though he were at the head of an army. Professor Webster found him "the most human and approachable of Princes," and so he was to the unfortunate and humble, and perhaps also to the undeserving. We hear of his amenities with servants and waiters, and of his dislike to confirm capital punishments. To save a prisoner from being hung in the morning he and Lady Conyngham sat up most of a night devising ways out of the noose. The French Embassy reported that in August, 1827, the King commuted every Capital penalty at the City Assizes, except one for highway robbery. His hates and dislikes fell upon the powerful. He postponed a Council rather than receive Denman, and *la* Lieven had to steer very tactfully betwixt her love and the King's dislike for Grey. Even Lady Conyngham failed to soften the King towards Grey, though she told *la* Lieven that "the prejudice is strong but nothing is impossible."

Prejudice had been strong against Canning, but the King delighted in Canning's boast that he had changed his Sovereign from the tail to the head of Europe. Canning made England the dispenser between Spain and her Colonies, between Portugal and Brazil, and the Holy Alliance, severely chipped in both those affairs, was about to receive a final crack over the Eastern Question. Polignac noticed Canning's excessive calm while the Anglo-Russian convention was maturing, nor was he wholly placed at his ease, though the King entertained him in honour of the new King of France upon the feast day of St. Charles Borromeo wearing the gold and azure glories of the *Saint Esprit.*

Meantime the Eastern Question! All the jealousies and enthusiasms of Europe were bent to the pacification of Greece, which lay like a whining lazar at the golden gate of the Grand Sophy. Greeks and Turks impaled or crucified each other with inconsiderate zeal. The Patriarch was hung in his vestments above the Seraglio. Philhellenism simmered in England and Germany. When an Egyptian fleet was sent to restore the balance of atrocity, Lord Cochrane launched obsolete steam-

boats and the phrase from Isaiah, " Woe to those who descend to bring aid in Egypt!" Everybody interested was dilemmatised. The Czar, for instance, had to choose between the Grand Sophy as a fellow-Sovereign and the Patriarch as a fellow-Churchman. The Greek insurgents were divided amongst themselves, and a volunteer from the Washington family was typically killed in their feuds. Then the gong of the gods rang, and Byron left Countess Guiccioli for Greece. The Etonian Canning took no official notice of the Harrovian free-lance beyond saying that no Government could " interfere with the voluntary sacrifice by an individual." With equalising compromise Canning recognised Greek rebels while striking English volunteers off the Army active list. He was playing at foils with Metternich and the Czar, who " was damned if he would speak Greek to us." Esterhazy complained that Austria was left out, and the King replied, " No, that is not so. I am not a Greek, God knows. I send the whole nation to the Devil. I share the opinion of my Cabinet that the Ottoman Empire is trembling into ruin." The Czar called a Congress, and Metternich posed the dilemma of Greek Independence, which produced a split between Czar and Metternich, into which gaily tripped Princess Lieven. Canning could henceforth chaff Metternich for being the first to suggest Greek Independence, to which Metternich only asked whether England would recognise " the first Irish Club which declares itself the Insurgent Government of Ireland "!

Canning had drawn away Metternich's old love and Russia from Austria. *La* Lieven had previously done her worst with the King against Canning. She was now prepared to do her best with the Czar on his behalf. She wisely saw that Canning did not want her as a lover, but " as a lever to unite himself to us. His most powerful motive was the pleasure of circumventing Metternich." She sped to St. Petersburg and returned as a living despatch with the great secret that the Czar would accept Canning's overtures on Greece. The fate of Greece, the isolation of Austria, the agreement of Russia and England were tucked under *la* Lieven's lips. The Czar was changing

the policy of Europe. It was more than Destiny intended, and before the end of 1825 the Czar perished.

Canning and *la* Lieven were not defeated, though a literal checkmate it was; "The king is dead." A new game was begun and Canning moved the Duke to St. Petersburg to arrange the Greek Question with the new Czar, a move of sublime buffoonery, thought *la* Lieven, but it worked. The mystified but reactionary Duke signed the famous protocol which led to the freedom of Greece. "We were too prudent to laugh," was *la* Lieven's comment.

Then collapsed Lord Liverpool in apoplexy, and a vacant Premiership confirmed the alliance of the Russian Ambassadress and the English Minister. Canning was willing to waive the Catholic Question to attain the great prize. *La* Lieven "reported to Lady Conyngham confidences of Canning so as to make much impression on her." Canning lay Whiggishly low while the Tory Dukes went rampant. The King sat on the hedge writing to the sister of the aphonous Liverpool that he was waiting till that good man could advise him. The King enjoyed playing an umpire's rôle and dangling the prize before Wellington, who bitterly decided there was "a moral twist in him which made it quite impossible to believe in what he said at the moment." The Duke became thick-headed and petty enough to call Canning "a damned old woman." But what are the warriors of the world in the hands of women, old or young? Even Esterhazy had not learnt his lesson, and remonstrated against Canning's appointment as Premier, whereat the King extinguished him with the coolest gravity.

The Duke of Newcastle arrived to bluster against Canning, whereat the King turned the conversation to his tailor, presumably a hint to stick to his ducal last. The King summoned the rivals for the Premiership and proceeded to take impish sport, wittily described by *la* Lieven. After a private conference with the Duke, which looked ill for Canning's chances, "the King began by turning to me in a mood of neat malice and said quite loud, 'I am sure that you and the Duke would like to go out together,'" which they did to their great and

mutual boredom. Lady Conyngham was allotted to alleviate the boredom of Prince Lieven, but Canning remained with the King. Three hours later "it was the Duke's turn to pull a long face." At dinner "all sought to understand the King. He was impenetrable. He took a little pleasure in teasing me," noted *la* Lieven, who told Canning he would be Premier. Her guess was right.

The King sent Peel to suggest the Duke to Canning—but Canning refused to serve. The Duke would not suggest himself, and the King was in a predicament until Peel at the last moment tried to cram the Duke upon the King, which meant dispensing with Canning. To the Duke of Buckingham the King declared, "I did not want Canning upon Castlereagh's death, but they forced him upon me. Now they wanted to force Wellington, but I have shown them that I will not be bullied." "Sir, your father broke the domination of the Whigs," said Canning. "I hope your Majesty will not endure that of the Tories." Kingliwise the King replied, "No, I'll be damned if I do!" and Canning became Premier! Polignac reported the political effect of the King; "As soon as the royal hand was withdrawn from the Tory chiefs the Tory Party only showed the sad spectacle of vain efforts to form a real opposition to the new administration." In a sense Canning was the invisible return of the Whigs to power. The King had not abandoned Whiggery after all, for Canning's elevation was followed by high Tory resignations, Peel and Eldon.

Then were begun and accomplished the hundred days of Canning. He opened his Premiership under the fairest auspices, Lady Conyngham's to wit. As she had backed Knighton, so was she now pleased to back Canning where *la* Lieven claimed she had translated him. Her Ladyship's power was recognised to be at its height. She sat at the King's right hand even in the presence of the Princesses of the Blood. Her brother-in-law was made Governor of Canada. Her tutor was a Bishop. Polignac observed that Canning only "mastered the will of the King by means of the Marchioness." The King accepted the triumvirate of Premier, Lady Steward and

Apothecary. Polignac for reasons of state declined Knighton's medical services. Lord Dudley, an eccentric *bon viveur*, was placed in the Foreign Office apparently as a joke on Europe. All policy was reserved to Canning.

Strategical tennis continued for another round. Canning wrote warily to the Duke, who bluntly asked who was going to be Premier. Canning returned a veiled rebuke, which he showed to the King. As soon as the Duke realised that the King "takes the advice of this charlatan" he resigned the Army, and received a roguish reply that "the King assures the Duke of Wellington that he feels the same regret in accepting his resignation which the Duke of Wellington professes to experience in offering it." The King had learnt to treat the Duke with an appropriate mixture of fun and fear. He pretended to be afraid of the old warrior, and took all possible amusement out of their meetings. Good-naturedly he kept the command of the Army in his own hand until "his friend Arthur recovered his temper." Achilles left his sulk for Windsor, and told the King with the necessary circumlocutions imposed by etiquette that he was a liar. "I told him that I thought I recollected some circumstances as having occurred in a manner different from that which His Majesty had stated that they had occurred." The poor Duke was convinced that Canning only wished to retain him in office for the pleasure of ejecting him. The King let Canning know that the visit was unpolitical and unexpected, but might be attributed "to its being the anniversary of my coronation!" The King loved the last laugh.

Canning was in the saddle at last and, though he had to keep the delicate balance between Protestant Tories and Emancipating Whigs, he advanced the solution of the Eastern Question at full speed. In vain the Continental Chancelleries hoped he would be too embarrassed at home to strike abroad. The fleets of the Powers were gathering in the Mediterranean. The Convention between the Powers for the pacification of the East leaked in *The Times*, "a disgraceful transaction," explained the Foreign Office circular. Lord Dudley did not seem to care,

and referred everything to the invisible Canning. The fatal month of August drew near. Suddenly Canning fell sick, burned by his own mental energies. "They will be the death of poor Canning and of us," groaned the King. Knighton carried assuring but useless messages to the deathbed. Within a few days of Castlereagh's obit, and within a few hours of the Queen's anniversary Canning was dead (August 8, 1827). Only the tomb, reflected French Diplomacy, could temper the brilliance which had defended the Lisbon expedition. The Duke grimly attributed his decease to bad temper, and resumed his command of the Army. Metternich was particularly rejoiced at the passing of "a malevolent meteor." But the King, realising Canning's dying words that his death would be harder on himself, mourned his mighty Legate to the Nations. To Canning's friends and relict, needless to say, "he behaved like a perfect gentleman." Mrs. Canning was given a Peerage, and Canning's old tutor was asked to accept the Bishopric of Carlisle.

Canning dead, destinies flowed swiftly to their conclusion. The Dardanelles were blocked by allied fleets without putting lid to the seven years of hell which had raged in Greece. The Sublime Porte refused the sublime mediation of England and Russia with sublime insolence. The Egyptian fleets continued to spoil Greece, though the English Admiral offered them a safe return to the Nile. Admiral Codrington, an old Nelsonian captain, with no precise orders at the first collision wiped Mahomet off the Mediterranean; British Admirals being always of two types, those who avoid making a desirable dash, and those who bring about unexpected decisions. Navarino was the scene of one of the latter, and the glorious echo of Lepanto, the only European victory for centuries, was referred to in diplomacy as "*evenement inattendu*," or in the King's speech lamented as "an untoward incident" at the expense of "an ancient ally." The King laughingly said that he sent the Admiral a riband instead of a halter, and *la* Lieven accounted it a *feu-de-joie* for Metternich's wedding day (November 5, 1827). But Navarino was the last gesture of the Crusades and, had

the fruit of victory been consistently pruned, future agonies might have been spared England and France within those seas. At least old Codrington's guns had thundered a magnificent salute over the graves of Canning and Byron, who both in their manner had died on the path of the freedom of Greece, England's "ancient ally" notwithstanding!

There is unfortunately no historical truth in the rumour that Lord High Admiral Clarence scribbled on Codrington's instructions "go in and fight, old boy," or words to that effect. But in the interregnum the King and Clarence distributed the rewards, including decorations for the French sailors: "a precious bond for the two navies," wrote Polignac. This was done, says Greville, "without consulting the Ministers, who learnt the British awards in the *Gazette*." The King gave Sumner the Bishopric of Winchester at the same time. So Lady Conyngham had her will, and the good Lord Liverpool may or may not have turned in his grave, his methodistical soul being at peace. Since Canning's death there was a Premier called "Goody" Goderich, whose weakness left all the power and patronage to the King. Lord Goderich was ridiculed by his own subordinates and, when he disappeared into the country, an advertisement was published in *The Times* for his return. He was distraught even by the task of filling a Canonry at St. Paul's. *La* Lieven maliciously described "the great events of Europe being at the mercy of *Lady* Goderich's headaches." The Treaty concerning Greece showed signs of paralysis. France was anxious and Russia pushful while England slower grew. France tried to halt Russia and quiet England, whose anti-Russian policy was germinating. Destiny afar signalled the Crimean War. Meantime Metternich and the Papal Internuntio at Constantinople were arguing with the uncompromising Turks and Russian Armies were descending upon the Grand Sophy, who played for inter-Christian collision. In spite of French anxiety England remained undecided. Lord Dudley took daily advice from the Coterie in place of Canning. "Six months ago England had a Minister. Now she has only a Ministry," was the French summary. Dudley amused the

King and caused emotion at dinners, diplomatic and other, which he criticised with voluble apologies under the impression that he was the host. His world mark was minus nil, except for adding his old tutor Copleston to the Episcopal Bench. In French opinion Knighton counted more, although "an obscure man without spirit or any consistence except the Royal favour." His temporary disagreement with the Conynghams showed that a feminine favourite is always stronger than the male. The King humiliated Knighton by asking him in front of the Conynghams, when he expected his friend Rothschild from Paris, "and you know how often you have worried me to promise to receive him." Apparently the acquaintance of the Rothschild family was not so highly valued as it deserved. Herries, Goderich's Chancellor of the Exchequer, was disliked more as a Rothschild intimate than as a Tory wedge into the Cabinet. Herries was an example of Goderich's doddering idiocy. Having induced the King to accept Herries over a royal candidate, the Premier omitted to inform the Cabinet, who furiously mistook Herries as the King's choice. Lansdowne, the Whig end of the Cabinet, wished to resign until the King implored him not to abandon him to the Peels and Eldons. But the King would not admit the Arch-Whig Holland, saying, "I love him as a son, and though I do approve of perpetual exclusion I must think of what will be said by my brothers of France and Austria." The Whig opposition apparently learnt of the little plans of Goderich through his wife's companion, a Miss Acland, who was also a relative of Brougham. Nothing marks Goderich's Ministry in history, except that they should have been the most brilliant, being chosen among Cambridge men whereas Lord Liverpool's had been wholly Oxonian, an academic rivalry which was transferred during the reign to an annual boat race. At the prospect of meeting Parliament Goderich resigned in tears, which were permitted to bedew the royal handkerchief. At the beginning of 1828 the King having tried milk and water realised the need of a little iron and sent for the Duke, to whom he stated from under the royal bed-clothes; "Arthur, the Cabinet is defunct!" He then

PLATE VIII.—AN ECLIPSE OF GEORGIUM SIDUS (THE DUKE)

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performed a perfect imitation of the voice and manner of each resigning Minister, thus beginning that strange and memorable conjunction, which was as that of an invalid and a vulture.

With the Duke's Premiership the King entered into his decline. Physically he was shattered, and mentally he was sapped. Times were not tranquil. English policy hesitated between Dublin and the Dardanelles. The Czar was at war with Turkey, and while his legions were rushing upon Constantinople, O'Connell's multitudes were demanding religious freedom. The Duke steered toward Greek liberation abroad and Roman emancipation at home. The Catholic Question was inevitable as long as Ireland existed. Since the Great War men had bred recklessly in both countries, and the result of high birthrate and high taxes was O'Connell in Ireland and Cobbett in England. The oligarchy of Church and Squire was challenged, as it were, by a vicious circle. Christian marriage demanded large families. Large families entailed poverty and mobs. Mobs and poverty developed Jacobins, and Jacobins laid the axe to English Christianity. Irish Jacobinism took the form of Catholic agitation and, as a final portent, O'Connell was returned to Parliament.

The King reclined in a kind of Protestant paralysis. He could not prevent, but he would not accept the event. His health was sickly and his soul clouded. His dead father began to obsess a mind, which seemed to absorb from that chilly Mausoleum beneath Windsor Castle the buried prejudices against the Catholics, which had driven the Third George insane. It seemed as though a miasma rose out of the coffins of those good and true-blue Protestants the Duke of York and his father, and slowly drove the King's once noble and now lonely mind into madness. How else is his conduct accountable? For one lucid moment he suggested holding an Irish Parliament every three years and thus laying the Irish wrong, but hints and suggestions in Letters and Memoirs of the time show that he was in the clutch of Mortmain and under the subtle torpor of the tomb. A Protestant Hamlet was being troubled by his father's ghost, and neither "Ophelia" Lady

Conyngham nor Bishop "Polonius" Sumner could induce softer or more politic feelings towards the Catholics.

The crisis arrived. The grim Duke decided to reverse his own views and pass Catholic Emancipation as a substitution for civil war. His Tory Prætorians went into revolt. The King became enraged almost to fanaticism, and seemed anxious to redeem his faulty life by laying it down on the block. When Anglesey went as Viceroy to Ireland, the King blessed him for his true Protestant, which compliment the Viceroy declined, writing favourably to the Catholic Archbishop Curtis, which the King assailed as "a proud and pompous farrago of the most *outré* bombast." There were wheels within wheels. Dr. Curtis from his Seminary in Spain had rendered the campaigning Duke secret services for which Ducal influence had been exerted to give him the Irish Primacy. Anglesey knew that Primate and Duke understood each other, but the general order for advance had not been given, and he was removed from the Vice-Royalty. The Duke was converting the King by degrees, who was still at the stage of "Damn it, do you mean to let them into Parliament?" And at his side stood the sinister Duke of Cumberland.

Cumberland, popularly represented as a Bluebeard, seemed conscientiously anxious to fill the part of a Lord George Gordon in organising anti-Papal mobs and petitions. Brunswick Clubs sprang up under his ægis to keep England Protestant, and England he sarcastically told the King was ruled by "King Arthur." Greville wrote that "The Duke of Cumberland has worked him into a state of frenzy, and he talks of nothing else in the most violent strain." Cumberland was only suppressed by the Duke's threat to order him out of the country, while Lady Conyngham's charms were devoted to soothing the King. Knighton joined her in screening him from excitable influences, but Dukes had the right of entry. Newcastle arrived with an offer of Protestant support, but during his secret audience was certain that he heard a noise behind the arras.

The high Ladies were as usual more frenzied and insulting than their men. The Duchess of Rutland provided herself

with a number of stuffed rats, which she labelled with the names of adherents to the Catholic Bill. Upon Lady Conyngham burst a fœtid attack which has never left her memory. The suicide of Lord Graves, which deeply touched the King, was used to fire opinion against Cumberland. The Duke continued upon the solemn and obstinate path of duty. The King, on the other hand, fluctuated and flustered considerably. At one time he aired the old threat to retire to Hanover, forgetful that as King of Hanover he had signed a plenary Concordat with the Holiness of the Twelfth Leo. "I see distinctly we are going to have Charles the First's times again," he observed. His conscience told him that he was not fulfilling his Coronation Oath to "support to the utmost of his power the Protestant Religion," and he sent for Eldon, who fought the Bill in the Lords, and for four hours told him how Canning had promised never to raise the Catholic Question, but he had to assure the angry Duke that nothing calculated to annoy him had passed in those four hours. The King groaned that the Duke ruled England, O'Connell ruled Ireland, and that he was reduced to the Deanery of Windsor! But he approved the Duke's pistol duel with Winchelsea on the ground that gentlemen must not stand upon their privileges.

The Royal Family were as usual divided unto exasperation, and when Cumberland appealed to his "sainted father" in the Lords, he was well trounced by the liberal-minded Clarence and Sussex. Clarence dropped the word "infamous," which Cumberland challenged, but Sussex rose and begged him to apply it to himself if he wished. Clarence finally reminded Cumberland that he had lived too long out of England to remember freedom of debate. The Bill was passed. It was the victory of the driving intellectuals and driven Tories over the bigoted bourgeoisie and the King reacting to paternal complex. The Duke had only saved his Waterloo popularity by raising the tax from beer! Cumberland, smarting under defeat, brought his Duchess from Germany, and sat down to nervify the King and watch the possible opening to the throne, should the heir-apparent lose such mental composity as he possessed.

The sicker the King, the less inclined he became to give his consent. After five hours the Duke extracted a kind of royal satisfaction, but Peel's defeat at Oxford gave the King further excuses. He showed infinite resource and resistance as a brake on his Ministers, but, when they resigned, he could not find a successor and the final surrender was swift, " not a day's delay after all I heard in my visits," groaned Eldon. His own Household had turned against him, the Conynghams refusing to vote against the Bill and Lady Conyngham offering no sympathy against the Duke's bullying. Finally he took her advice, and sent the Duke a complete surrender. " God knows what pain it cost me to write these words." The Duke's final letter announcing the figures he left unanswered, and at the next levee turned his back on the ratting Bishops. He had at least tried to defend the Faith, and as a King to keep the word that he had sometimes broken as a gentleman.

The King now withdrew from politics and public, though he continued his attendance at Ascot in the vain hope of winning the Ascot Cup. Even fishing in Virginia Water was abandoned after the publication of an impudent caricature entitled " the Kingfisher," in which he was represented as a Mandarin hooking a mermaid with gold bait to Lady Conyngham's distress. He forgave old sporting disputes, and to the grief of the judicious Eldon, " His Majesty gave a good dinner in his Palace to the Jockey Club, which venerable society comprehends some individuals who are scarcely fit visitors. These things are topsy-turvy doings." The King chaffed them for their resemblance to a Quakers' meeting and made a little speech against the export of blood-horses from England. But his mind was failing, and sometimes he imagined himself not only the owner but the rider of winners on the Turf.

Ireland was free religiously, and Civil Emancipation crowned Greece, thanks to the triple squabble of the Powers, but it was necessary to find a Hellenic King. The English candidate was a Protestant Prince of Hesse, while France supported a Prince of Saxe, who as Aberdeen pointed out was less likely as a Catholic to become converted to the Greek Church. Sussex

was also proposed, but *la* Lieven was the first to guess how strong a candidate Prince Leopold favoured in himself. The death of his wife and child had lost him the future guidance of one throne, and full patiently he awaited Destiny to reveal the possibility of another, while he poured forth Hellenic sentiments to the representatrix of Russia. Against Stockmar's advice he allowed the Cabinet to force his candidature on the King without making essential conditions. Leopold had not been in the graces of King George since the trial of the Queen Caroline, whom he had avoided visiting until her respectability seemed likely to triumph. The Queen had refused to see him, and he was left to explain to the King that he had visited her as a mother-in-law and not as Queen. The King turned his back upon him at levee, and Leopold left the presence with becoming Cobourg pride. It was only after his daughter's death that the King allowed Leopold to join the Royal Family as a Royal Highness, at the same time requiring the return of the silver plate given or lent to him. He seemed to Greville "overcome by the weight of his dignity."

The King's rage may be imagined when he found himself the last to learn Leopold's candidature for Greek honours. Timorously Aberdeen had avoided mentioning his name to the King, who exclaimed that "if France intrigues with my Cabinet to dispose of a Prince of my family I regard it as an insult." But Leopold could afford to be patient both under misfortune and insult. Though opposed by the King and the Duke he was the candidate of Necessity. French diplomacy reported his proposal to marry a French Princess, as "the alliance which he has passionately desired appears to him necessary to complete his destiny." The King had a violent altercation with Aberdeen, which the Duke had to calm, for the King preferred the prize for the brother of the Duchess of Cumberland. At first the King refused to receive Leopold, but accorded him an interview of two hours during which Greece was not mentioned. The Greek Crown was officially offered to Leopold in January of 1830, and the formal document was despatched "in a large brown paper addressed to one of his *valets de*

*chambre*." In April the King fell ill, and in May the patient Leopold irrevocably refused Greece. French diplomacy then had been right in suspecting "something uncertain and irresolute at the bottom of the Prince's thought." *La* Lieven again guessed and rightly, for Clarence was also ill, and "the vision of a minority began to appear." Making the financial conditions his excuse, Leopold kept himself from Greece for better things. The Whigs, who had backed him for Greece, were ready to back him in case of a Regency. The King asked the Duke whether the Czar and the French King did not share his indignation against Leopold. Leopold was more patient than ever, for the King was dying.

The King had reached his last lap, which might be said to be also Lady Conyngham's, for she became his indispensable nurse. "The Marchioness appears to me to have improved her position. She is treated as Queen. The King gives her the right hand place over the Duchess of Cumberland. . . . Mrs. Arbuthnot's favour with the great Captain appears to be declining. If this is true who is to have the survivance? The space left void by the Marchioness would be still more difficult to fill." So *la* Lieven twittered to Grey in the autumn of 1829. Before the end of the year Lady Conyngham was ill, and the Duchess of Gloucester found "Lord Conyngham crying like a child and the King very anxious indeed. He is resolved to give up all his time and attention to Lady Conyngham, and to receive no one till she is recovered. She does nothing but cry."

The year 1830 brought the final illness. The King had been able to keep madness at bay, but he was sorely troubled by the catastrophe of his physique, though it cannot have been as amorphous as Creevey described.

Greville described his life, transacting all business in bed, only rising to dine with Lady Conyngham, and ringing his bell forty times in the night. His valets were more exhausted by his life of undress than in the days when he triumphed over the Dandies. "At last Lady Conyngham prevailed on him to agree to an arrangement by which they wait on him on alternate days." As he swelled with dropsy, the great lover became

PLATE IX.—THE ROCKING HORSE (LADY CONYNGHAM)

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pathetically sensitive to the eyes of his subjects. "I will not allow those maid-servants to look at me when I go in and out." No one saw him in those days, and for a while cataract prevented his own vision of others. When it was necessary to operate on his eyes, the Duke gave credit that he was "always perfectly cool and neither feared operations nor their possible consequences."

The King's whims and wishes were watched. He promised to write of his convalescence to the French King with his own hand. He was permitted the illusion of a promised visit to the waters at Aix la Chapelle. When his famous giraffe, the butt of so many caricatures, died, it was stuffed. His temporary request for the assassination of Knighton was disregarded as a pang of irritability, and poor Knighton had his own cross to bear, when a Windsor apothecary called O'Reilly was summoned to prescribe a new treatment. It consisted largely in the administration of Windsor gossip, for which the King had an undying addiction. Knighton protested in vain against the "muddling mischievous O'Reilly," the last of the King's Irish favourites. In the twilight of his brain the King found comfort in strange and delightful delusions. As subjects often imagine themselves Kings, so Kings are happy imagining themselves in rôles otherwise impossible to the royal person. The King was happy enough in his delusions, unlike his father's last lunacies. Remorse and regret do not seem to have been allowed to torture the august sufferer, who was still happily convinced that his life had been for the best. He was saved metaphysical agonies and theological tremors. At one time he believed he was thrashing a Brighton butcher, and at another that he was riding Fleur-de-Lis for the Goodwood Cup. The Duke had long sanctioned his retrospective command of a division at Waterloo, but his favourite sickbed memory was the charge of the Dragoons at Salamanca. It was Salamanca that affected his whole Regency and Reign. It had been the beginning of the end for Napoleon and the tiding of the tide. The Dragoons had saved the Regent at home and the Duke in the field, and the Tory Party and perhaps Europe. It was an

episode to which the King was delighted to return in dream, but not wholly in delusion. He had always had the vision and pride to back the Duke, and the Duke had always won. All that had followed Salamanca had glorified and aggrandised his people, his Ministers and his country and Regency.

According to royal etiquette a King cannot attend the funeral of a subject, nor may a corpse remain under the same roof, so the entry of Death was not announced at Windsor. The awe-inspiring shades of Castlereagh and Canning stood to usher the King's last visitor. The King had always wished to receive deathbed attentions from Bishop Sumner, but Sumner had failed him on the Catholic Question. Bishop Carr was substituted by the courtiers, and the appearance of a large-type Bible at the royal bedside must have seemed ominous. "He had not seen such a book in the room before, and he knew it must have been placed where it was by an affectionate hand. He stretched out his arm and ascertained that it was the inestimable consolation of the Christian in his last extremity." So the pious Grantley Berkeley in words that were not ironical.

The sands were running out. He still retained likes and dislikes. He babbled of the green Turf and nearly choked in speaking of Leopold, who was waiting patiently outside. On May 25 the royal stable won the Craven Stakes, and the King gave orders for an Ascot party in the Cottage. The Ascot meeting arrived, but there was no royal party to the course. Instead Couriers rode to Windsor with tidings of each race, but, according to etiquette, none made mention of a White Horse alluded to as a dead certain winner in Scripture. In June bulletins began, and despite Lady Conyngham's vigilance a letter reached the King from his wife. Mrs. Fitzherbert had come to London in an apprehension of grief, and communicated through Sir Henry Holford a last gesture to the King's bedside. Sir Henry wrote to her that the King's "constitution is a gigantic one and his elasticity under the most severe pressure exceeds what I have ever witnessed in 38 years' experience." And O'Reilly told Windsor that with common prudence the

King could have lived to a hundred. All the same "I am going gradually," said the King to O'Reilly. Doctors described his constitution as "athletic." His long agony was compared to the agonies of York and of Queen Charlotte. But in his agony he commended the Conynghams to his successor.

Mrs. Fitzherbert was still waiting to be summoned from London. To a friend she wrote, "I remembered the King always liked to excite compassion, and that he always wished everyone to think him dangerously ill when little was the matter with him." But this time there was need for compassion, and the good physician placed Mrs. Fitzherbert's letter into the King's hands. He read the familiar script and placed it under his pillow. There was no answer. Love and Life ebb together. Knighton and Lady Conyngham kept watch to the end, though "the King complained of their being so constantly in his room when he wanted to be quiet and desired Holford to prevent it happening again." He slept for twenty-four hours, awaking in the early morning of June 26. "This is death!" he cried. "Oh God! they have deceived me." The King lay back. On his neck rested a ribbon holding the miniature of the woman he had loved best to his heart. It was three in the morning, and a friend of Mrs. Fitzherbert heard the tolling of St. Paul's and brought word to the old lady in Tilney Street that she was a third time widowed. "I always said he would die like a man," was the comment of the Duke, who was curious enough to examine the miniature.

The King was dead, and Lady Charlotte Bury gives him credit for lifting his thoughts in prayer while Lady Conyngham was occupied in packing articles of value. The day's rumour was that "first she packed and then she prayed and then she packed again." Lady Charlotte charitably recalled that "the King was accustomed to go to a private Chapel with Lady Conyngham," so that "it was satisfactory to think that like many of his family he died the death of the righteous." Later "Lady Conyngham was compelled to relinquish many crown jewels." As her last years at Windsor had been years of semi-martyrdom to the King's ailments, she was perhaps

owed as much as she took. Her task, however flattering at first, had become more and more ungrateful. Her condemnation is written with scarlet letters in the footnotes to English history. But she was as discreet in public as she was wise in private counsel. The elevation of Bishop Sumner began as a mistake on her part, but led to a monomania with the King and an eventual adornment of the National Church. Her day was over. She had been more beautiful than most commoners and more powerful than any Queen. During ten years she swayed if she did not rule a country which owed her more than it owed to Lady Hamilton. For the King's sake she had suffered in health and happiness. She had endured ignominy even to the last bitter cartoon, which represented "a moving scene on the road to Slane," as the Conyngham family pushed home a barrow filled with Windsor chattels. She had done all that a woman could do to make the reign of her admirer a success. The difficulties she smoothed over outbalanced any she caused. Let no one judge the Marchioness without being certain that the Day of Judgment will afford better proofs than the Memoirs and Caricatures of the day. The Marchioness was elderly and protected by her family, when she accepted the invitation to live under the King's roof. She may have enjoyed the dynamism of power which was symbolised in diamonds, but she was as little inclined to orgy as her aging adorer. Hypochondriac was the King, but no hypocrite. Those who have tasted passion young do not ask to drain its dregs. In any case neither the English Peerage nor Plebs were qualified to throw stones through windows at Windsor, which, be it remembered, is the centre of an Order of unsullied chivalry boasting a motto selected with Evangelical irony: *Honi soit qui mal y pense!* that most Exalted Order, which the Fourth George had exalted by extending to the Sovereigns of Europe, amongst whom he stood not the least when he died.

# EPILOGUE

"THUS ended the life of George the Fourth, one of the cleverest and most accomplished men in Europe, full of benevolence"—wrote Knighton to Lady Knighton, who later gathered her husband's correspondence into the most discreet and uninforming Biography in English. Knighton therein piously sang his *nunc dimittis;* "I hope by degrees to pass into a religious old age remarkable for simplicity of conduct and character." Accordingly Sir William Knighton disappears in the view of history from the jealousy of apothecaries and from the malice of courtiers.

It remained to deposit the royal relics in the mighty Mausoleum sunk to sarcophagise the dynasty. The awe-inspiring surroundings of King George the Third were as effectively concealed from the lay or common eye as within the pyramidal tomb of the aromatised Pharaohs. Around him lay his more precious children, the Princess Amelia, the Dukes of York and Kent. It was to choose a spot for York close to his father that George had sent Knighton "in the dead of night with a single torch in the bowels of the earth." Knighton had been deeply moved by the proximity of the royal dead, "all of whom I believed had at that moment a spiritual existence. I felt as if the Almighty was present, and almost imagined that the spirits of the departed were also before me."

In this time the body of the Fourth George was brought to the yawning vault with the accompaniments of superlative grandeur and sepulchral pride which national etiquette demands of a King's burial. While the full-toned music of Handel drowned the regular timing of the minute guns firing in the Long Walk, the pathetic pageant moved into St. George's Chapel. With bowed heads and inscrutable thoughts the Marquis of Conyngham and Sir William Knighton preceded the regal corpse. They had been his puppets in his lifetime, and suitably they became mutes at his carrying forth. Princes of the Blood, whose gyrations had long revolved around those of the King, passed to either side of the unfeeling cavity.

There sat in funereal robes the jovial and enlightened Sussex. There sat the saturnine and reactionary Cumberland. The chief and most affected mourner was the new King William the Fourth, unexpectedly called from the Quarter Deck to the throne of Plantagenets. The Iron Duke carried the Sword of State like an executioner. The Duke, in the early hours of June 28, had broken the news of his accession to Clarence, who had returned to bed to enjoy, as he quaintly observed, the novelty of sleeping with a Queen. In the midst sat the Prince Leopold of Saxe-Cobourg-Gotha waiting patiently for the next crown to roll casually within grasp.

Meantime the coffin of the crownless sank out of sight, and only the Latin lettering upon the casquet remained to tell the future historian and the remoter excavator that it contained;

DEPOSITUM
SERENISSIMI POTENTISSIMI ET EXCELLENTISSIMI
MONARCHÆ
GEORGII QUARTI
DEI GRATIA BRITANNIARUM REGIS
FIDEI DEFENSORIS
REGIS HANOVERÆ AC BRUNSVICI ET LUNEBURGI DUCIS
OBIIT XXVI DIE JUNII
ANNO DOMINI MDCCCXXX
ÆTATIS SUÆ LXVIII
REGNIQUE SUI XI

The mighty titles of the august denizen of the tombs were rehearsed, and the wand of the Lord Chamberlain was broken and cast into the grave, whence there can be no reushering. The King's unfeeling biographers laid stress on the sense of holiday which the occasion afforded the populace, and even the afflicting grief of his personal servants was traced to loss of position rather than of master. Amid the holocaust of love-tokens and feminine souvenirs which followed, let the tears of the King's attendants pass as an expression of genuine sentiment. There was a noticeable aftermath in Europe, as though one of the pillars of ancient regime had been withdrawn. The

King died in Ascot week and, before the next classic had been run, the King of France fell from the throne of the Bourbons in the Revolution of July, as the English King had prophesied. Pheasant shooting had not commenced, before English gentlemen heard of the Belgian revolt from the King of the Netherlands. Prince Leopold's destined throne was unveiled, and in the following year he entered Brussels covered by Ponsonby's diplomacy and the ships of Codrington, who had blazed his unaccepted trail to Greece. Patience was rewarded, and England chivied into kennel the Dutch King, who in later years used to complain of Leopold as the man who had robbed him of a wife and a Kingdom ! The patient Leopold settled down with his judicious Stockmar and his cameleon soul. During his wanderings he had begotten a possible Defendress of the Anglican Faith, and arranged to bring up his children in the Greek Church in the eventuality of the Greek throne. He now proceeded to raise a Catholic royal line for Belgium and from Brussels to survey the education of a niece, who was destined to take the place of his dead Charlotte upon the throne of the House of Brunswick.

In other words, the Victorian era was dawning, for the life of William the Fourth was not likely to hinder long from the throne the little Princess, who came pusslike to Windsor in 1826 to see the King, and was given a royal picture in diamonds in return for offering her " little paw " at King George's request. Queen Victoria herself recorded how "Lady Conyngham pinned it on my shoulder."

Wisely then Leopold had declined the kingship of Greece. Creevey judged the interregnum jauntily ; " I suppose Mrs. Kent thinks her daughter's reign is coming on apace and her brother may be of use versus Cumberland." The House of Cobourg had become unexpectedly secure upon the future. Of all the seven sons of the Third George there was left no legitimate male issue. The race royal of Brunswick was potentially as extinct as the giants of old, leaving only a female residue to be absorbed by the Cobourgs, who were supplying both mother and consort to the surviving granddaughter of George the

Third. French Diplomacy had noted anent the death of the Duke of Kent, " the kind of fatality which the House of Cobourg seemed to have brought in its alliances with the Royal House of England." The family of Saxe-Cobourg-Gotha represented character and patience, and their dispossession of the Brunswicks was as merited as that of Esau by Jacob. The Brunswicks were passing, the madness of their minds scattered to the winds and their bodily greatness thrown like seed by the wayside, leaving the little Ducal family, who had been trampled in the Napoleonic wars, not only to carry the English Crown into the future, but alone to bear the Imperial title in a twentieth century, whence Bonaparte and Habsbourg and Romanoff and Hohenzollern were destined to perish.

The death of George the Fourth was a turning post. His Reign and Regency were indubitably most effective and fruitful years in the History of England. He really attained something of the " victorious and glorious " demanded by the National Anthem. George enjoyed his success and the attendant splendours of success. For that motive alone he never concealed his flair for his great serving men of war or diplomacy. As Regent and King he presided over a National greatness never before or afterwards exceeded. The subsequent century produced imperial inflation rather than expansion. No Captains of men or steersmen of the State equalled the Georgians. Collingwood and Codrington left no successors. Castlereagh and Canning bequeathed the Foreign Office to a procession of caretakers and phantoms of themselves. The Georgian tradition had made England great. The Victorian claimed to make England good.

The Victorian era is now as remote as the Georgian, and both can face perspective. The Victorian age was largely an extension of the Georgian, producing in quantity what it lost in quality. Except in Science and Theology the stamp and mould of Georgian men was greater. Georgian architecture has remained to reproach later schools. Gibbon's masterpiece has not been surpassed by any historian. The greatest of English novels remains to the credit of Fielding, and the

romance of Scott outlives that of Stevenson. Even in caricature Rowlandson and Gillray, however coarse, make Tenniel seem insipid, while the line of Beardsley, though it may equal, does not surpass that of Cruickshank. Characteristic of the reign of George the Fourth were the short-lived meteors Shelley and Keats. Byron could only be a Regency poet, Miss Austen a Regency novelist and *Vanity Fair* a Regency novel. The world of art collects the Masters who painted for the Georgians and forgets the PræRaphaelites and Victorians who painted advertisements of soap or posters for the Oxford Movement. Under royal Georgian patronage flourished Romney, Raeburn, Lawrence, and it is always a pleasure to record the Regent's admiration for the delicate work of Miss Jane Austen, who in her limited field remains the most perfect writer of English. In 1815 Miss Austen was in London, and the Regent desired his librarian to wait upon her, to show her Carlton House and to pay her every attention. It appeared that he had not only read all her works, but kept sets in each royal residence. His librarian hinted that the dedication of a future volume would not be unacceptable. As a result *Emma* was dedicated to the Regent "by His Royal Highness's dutiful and obedient humble servant the author," who, however, was unable to meet the librarian's suggestion to write "a historical romance illustrative of the august house of Cobourg." That particular romance Destiny reserved to herself.

The same Regent, who appreciated Miss Austen, offered the Laureateship to Scott and even a place in his Privy Council. Byron after meeting the Regent told Scott that he "spoke alternatively of Homer and yourself and seemed well acquainted with both." It amused the Regent once to propose "the author of Waverley" as a toast at a dinner, at which Scott was present, but Scott kept his incognito and the Regent muttered, "I know he has told me a lie." But what an Attic evening it must have been when the Regent capped Scott's stories of the Scotch Judges with stories of Judges of his own! What tales and mimicry of Thurlow and Eldon!

No Prince had a keener sense for literature than the Prince, who made Fox his trumpet and Sheridan his scrivener. Sheridan could say that, however much he owed to Ireland, he owed most to Wales.

Sheridan's brother-in-law Ticknell, the author of *Anticipations*, had a peculiar attraction for the Prince, who gave him the rooms in Hampton Court out of which he committed suicide, but for his royal patron "the wit and pleasantry of his book could never fade." The Prince was also attracted by the curiosities of literature, by Ireland's Shakespeare forgeries, which he even thought deserving of consideration, and by the prospect of discovering a classical library from the papyri at Naples. He sent a mission at his own expense to decipher the manuscripts recovered from Herculaneum. Though the results were small, modern research has shown that he was following the right track. On the other hand, he caused to be printed from the State Office and edited by Bishop Sumner a supposed Latin work of Milton, which unfortunately "showed utter inconsistency with the religious principles maintained by Milton."

He made no collection like Royal Sussex, whose collection of rare Bibles set him among the bibliophiles, but he gave his father's library to the British Museum. He acquired the Stuart MSS. for Windsor. He established the Literary Fund, contributing five thousand pounds in contrast to the minute sums which are still bestowed upon the starving relicts of *literati*. He endowed Winchester with medals for English verse and prose. To Eton he gave a set of the Delphin Classics, which were subsequently referred to by that loyal College as "the useless gift of a royal rake." On his death the President of the Royal Society of Literature could recall "the warmth with which he entered into the general interests of Literature, the condescension with which he communicated many interesting particulars of his earliest studies." By the same authority he showed "very eminent proofs of his classical knowledge especially of the greatest poet of antiquity." It was with a line of Vergil that Dublin had hailed him, and he

never forgave the obscene quotation from Tacitus which Dr. Parr found for Denman to asperse him in the Lords.

He understood the value of Classics whether in Latin, Greek or his own tongue, making Sheridan, a living Classic, his best and closest friend. He assisted both Sheridan and Sheridan's son in their debts, but the parting came, and it would be unfair to recall intemperance in a dramatist or ingratitude in a Prince. It is pleasant to record the faithful Sheridan trying to stem the hissing which met the Prince's name at the Patrick's Night banquet of 1812. For comments on this same scene and on the Regent's person another literary man, Leigh Hunt, was sent to prison. Then Sheridan disappeared. It was in August, 1815, that the Prince caught his last glimpse of Sheridan; "I see him now," he told Croker in after years, "in the black stockings and blue coat with metal buttons. I said to Blomfield; 'There's Sheridan,' but as I spoke he turned off into a lane." It was one of those lanes that have no turning. The Prince was afterwards accused of leaving Sheridan to die in sordid squalor, but it became less historical to lay the accusation on the Prince, who indeed sent money, which was returned, as one of Sheridan's sons wrote that the dying dramatist "had every attention and comfort, which could make a deathbed easy," not to mention "snug lying in the Abbey."

The art of painting attracted the Prince, whose appreciation gilded many a palette. He restored palaces, if for nothing else, to house the Masters, whom he admired. His father had patronised West and Beechey, but the English school of Hoppner and Lawrence reached their opportunity under the patronage of the same Prince who made famous commemoration of Reynolds at the Academy dinner of 1811. His desire to replace the lost collection of King Charles, with whom he was sympathetically allied, was the germ of the National Gallery, which the pillars of Carlton House adorn.

The National Collection he founded by suggesting that the State should buy Angerstein's collection of thirty-eight pictures. He told West when President of the Academy that "there should have been a Gallery erected many years ago for modern

works and also for Old Masters. He spoke of the pleasure he derived from works of art." The *Farington Diary* is full of royal incidents among the artists. When the Queen requested Beechey to paint the Prince into the picture of the King, the King had it stripped and thrown out of the window. Father and son patronised Gainsborough, who by way of keeping the interest of his sitters talked decadence to the King and Decalogue to the Prince! Lawrence remained the painter for ever associated with the Prince, who commissioned him to paint the portraits glorifying the Waterloo Chamber at Windsor. Lawrence was always in love and always in debt, and his princely Mæcenas once complained that he had paid him £24,000 without receiving his pictures. He praised Lawrence's portraiture, while criticising his backgrounds as slovenly and spotty. He thought nothing of keeping Lawrence waiting for three hours! Nevertheless Lawrence and Raeburn were the two painters he most delighted to honour. Lawrence had been in disgrace owing to his relations with the Princess, but when the Prince saw his portrait of McMahon, he took it for himself. His next acquisition was the artist.

The day before Lawrence died, he was painting a picture of his royal patron. Among other artists the Prince patronised Haydon, whose picture of the Mock Election he purchased. Wilkie and Mulready also came under his pecuniary appreciation. The same purse contributed two hundred pounds to the wants of Beethoven, for Music was the Prince's own art, and he had made the Pavilion a home of harmony, inviting and accompanying the musicians himself. Even Brougham admitted he was "endowed with an exquisite ear for music and a justness of eye that fitted him to attain refined taste in the arts." He could play with players on the pianoforte, and mimic mummers in their own parts like Kemble. For those, who ever amused him, he kept a place in his much partitioned heart, for instance sending the Bishop of Chichester to assist O'Keefe when ninety and blind of age, an act of charity he described in somewhat stilted phrase as "the preservation of an invalided worshipper of the Thespian Muse."

The Prince's monument was built in stones. London was becoming the centre of world commerce, and the Pax Britannica was imposed by the combined desire of the successful shopkeeper and the laurelled veteran. His architectural vision crossed London, which he endeavoured to raise from a stunted metropolis to the status of an imperial capital. He enlarged her streets and spanned her river not unmemorably. Waterloo Bridge and Regent's Street, with All Souls' spire to break the view, endured a century at least. The Regent's Canal connected Limehouse with Paddington. Regent's Park was Nash's design for bridging the slums of Swallow Street to the stagnant pools of Marylebone, which had fallen to the Crown in 1811. Buckingham Palace he rebuilt rather than restored. Windsor Castle remains little less than his colossus, since he employed Wyatville to transform a decaying chaos into permanent unity, even heightening the Round Tower from within, and adding the pylonic gateway that bears his name.

In a guide issued for private circulation to Windsor Castle during the reign of Edward VII. credit is given where credit is due. "The restoration of the building in its present form is due to George IV., who employed Sir Jeffrey Wyatville as his architect. Though much criticised as to matters of detail, there can be no doubt that the nation owes a deep debt of gratitude to him as well as to the Sovereign for the genius which has rendered Windsor the most picturesque and stately of all the palaces of Europe. George IV. did not care to inhabit the old lodgings of the Sovereigns of the Stuart times, and by his orders Wyatville planned and arranged the series of rooms looking out over the East on a terraced garden, also of his creation. . . . Additional dignity was given to this side by the erection of a second lofty tower corresponding with one of the ancient defences of the fortress. Between these a great entrance was made . . . in line with the splendid avenue of elms known as the Long Walk." "A prince of consummate taste and fine conceptions, George the Fourth meditated and, what is better, accomplished the restoration of the castle to more than its original grandeur. All the incongruities of successive reigns

were removed; all or nearly all the injuries inflicted by time repaired," wrote the enthusiastic Harrison Ainsworth, the chronicler of the Castle.

The most magnificent mark left by the King at Windsor was the Waterloo Chamber in which Lawrence found his apotheosis as a painter. There for ever the great figures of the Era—all the dynasts save Napoleon face each other as once in the Council rooms of Europe—Czar and Emperor—Wellington and Blücher—Castlereagh and Canning—Pius the Pope, Consalvi the Cardinal.

George was always quarrelling with his statesmen on behalf of his architects. To the Duke, who declined further expense on Windsor Castle and "Pimlico Palace," he wrote to say, "Mr. Nash has been most infamously used. If those who go through the furnace for me and for my service are not protected, the favour of the Sovereign becomes worse than nugatory." Regent's Street was made out of Nash's stucco, and it is striking how many London landworks date from the reign of George the Fourth, such as the Colonnades of Hyde Park Corner, the Zoo and the bridge over the Serpentine. The marble copy of Constantine's Arch was once intended to support Chantrey's equestrian statue of the King now adorning Trafalgar Square. It was well said of the King that he shone "in the minute as well as in the superb," for he also patronised the exquisite miniaturist Cosway and relieved the widow of Muss the enamelist. He, who had introduced the muff into England, designed the apparel of the Household troops, and the Staff of an English Marshal. On military etiquette he was intransigeant, and when Lord Charles Russell arrived at Carlton House without aiguilettes the Prince said "Good evening, I suppose you are the regimental doctor"! The greatest military tailor deigned to devise a new mode of closing letters, which showed that he was on the point of anticipating the modern envelope.

George employed Flaxman to design the great silver-gilt wine cooler at Windsor, profanely referred to as the King's "ten thousand pound punch-bowl." It was these great

expenses lavished upon Art and Architecture which caused his unpopularity with the mob-journalists. The middle classes hated the artist in him as they had hated Shelley and Byron. Their idols were the tiresome, tawdry Caroline or the bloody Blücher.

The National Gallery preserves the unfinished profile Lawrence sketched of the King's head for the coinage, the rich and tangled brown hair scattered to the airs that blow, the straight nose and clear eye above the haughtily stocked neck, the supercilious look of devilry and reckless romance tempered by a monarch's pride. It is strikingly flanked by his bullet-headed, podgy-chinned, colossal-shouldered brothers of York and Kent. We can see him doubtless as Pistrucci saw him, when he designed the head for the gold sovereign, which Wellesley Pole as Master of the Mint described as " absolutely divine."

Among sculptors the King patronised Rossi, Chantrey and Westmacott. The *Farington Diary* described in 1786 how " Rossi was with the Prince of Wales modelling a small head. Rossi waited three hours before he was admitted during which time the Prince was entirely engaged by a shoemaker and two tailors." Chantrey's masterpiece was his statue of the King which used to stand (like the Statue and the Bust) looking towards Mrs. Fitzherbert's house at Brighton. The statue of James the Second at St. Germains was erected by the Prince, and when the Cardinal of York died *sub titulo* Henry IX., he commissioned Canova to erect his famous monument to the last of the royal Stuarts in St. Peter's Basilica upon the Vatican mount.

Canova's colossus of Napoleon he presented to his embarrassed conqueror. It may be claimed that the spirit, which he set abroad, was responsible for the acquirement of the Elgin marbles by the nation and, when the Apollo Belvedere was taken amid the battle spoil of Napoleon, it was symbolically awarded to the Regent, who munificently restored it to the Louvre.

Apart from the art of conversation, which the Prince encouraged, if he was not the equal of the great talkers of the time, he possessed two sure gifts to make him a social cynosure, the gift of mimicry and the use of manners as a fine art. Of

those famous manners many tales are told. For instance, when riding once he happened upon a man pilloried opposite the Horse Guards for issuing a libel against himself and wrote an apology " for the seeming indelicacy " of taking advantage to view him. Again he took the old Lady Clermont to her carriage, and begged her to take her time and not hurry, for gallantly said he, " If you tumble, I shall tumble with you." Again his distress as host was witnessed when Lord Anglesey met at Carlton House the Sir Henry Wellesley with whose wife he had eloped and married. As George hurried to explain and compose the friction, Castlereagh muttered that the sooner they met the better. It was the legend of these wondrous manners which Dickens immortalised in the unchallengeable deportment of Mr. Turveydrop.

His power of mimicry crops up in all the Memoirs of his times. He could equally imitate Thurlow's gruffness and Dr. Parr's lisp and Kemble's stage accent. On his journey to Hanover he convulsed the Sovereign of the Netherlands by mimicking the old Stadtholder during his visit to Carlton House. The *Granville Papers* give a peep behind the scenes of 1805; " Lord Abercorn is furious with the Prince. The Prince takes him off remarkably well lying along the benches with his arms across looking very fierce and stretching out his legs as though he was trying to kick Lord Grenville !"

As Lady Thomond observed, " He observes with nice attention any encroachment upon his importance, but does not express it at the time. He has a disposition to make people laughable to others, and does it skilfully by encouraging an exposure of a weakness and leading the person on to ridicule himself." And another well-balanced phrase described " his faculty of persuading all that he took a cordial interest in their interests; and without allowing the person, whom he so addressed, to forget he was a Prince, he exalted him to a level with himself as a friend."

What he would do as a friend, though certainly showing that he could forget himself as a Prince, appears in a note of Greville recording the cause of the fierce enmity between him

and Lord Sefton; "Arthur Paget was in love with Lady Sefton and at Stoke, when the Prince and a large party were staying, the King pimped for Arthur by taking Sefton out on some expedition and leaving the lovers to amuse themselves. Sefton found out that he had been taken out for this purpose and never forgave it." The same Greville, in spite of much virulent revilement, gives a delightful picture of his kindness to a Persian Ambassador, who was liable to decapitation unless he secured precedence for his master's representative from the Regent, who saved the situation by inviting him to one of his children's parties, where he received all the precedence an Oriental could wish. Lady Lyttelton gives an account of his unparalleled dinner to the Garter Knights in 1810; "The royal host worried and toasted himself till he rather clipped the King's English before it was over. But that's nothing! I love him for having the finest possible pictures of Lord Rodney, Lord Keppel, Lord St. Vincent and Nelson hung up as chief ornaments of his great room." And in 1822 Cam Hobhouse saw him at the Opera "enter with a flourish of trumpets and seat himself down under his great canopy like King Solomon in all his glory." At those forgotten receptions of the past he achieved his splendour as Prince and as King, showing there was at least one Neronian trait in his character and that, not unlike that picturesque Emperor, he could have cried at the last, "*qualis artifex pereo*"!

He was often compared to Nero for other reasons, and ferociously during the trial of the Queen. Landor finished his epitaph of George with the words "*continet omnes Nerones.*" But if the Roman historians would not have spared his morality, they would have chiselled epigrams to describe scenes which showed that he could no less exquisitely rebuff a subject than King Canute. When a man refused to take off his hat to the King, the King removed his own, observing, "I would take off mine to the meanest of my subjects." In Dublin, when the Earl of Kinsale used his privilege to remain covered in the royal presence, the King quietly told him to wear his hat before the King but not before ladies! But he suffered the hat of the Quaker.

It was by charm more than character that he achieved, and Mr. George Russell must be quoted again, though Whig-like he insists that "George was insensible to honour and incapable of veracity; but he knew how to make himself pleasant and therefore he succeeded where better men failed. Dishonesty proved to be the best policy. He kept his throne secure through a period of political upheaval." It may be asked what more can be expected of a King. England enjoyed victory abroad and peace at home. His mighty statesmen left a legacy of peace, even if it was the peace of the anvil when the hammers are taken away. It would be easier to laugh at William Jerdan's statement in *National Portraits* than to disprove that "under his sceptre England rose to a height of prosperity and renown so transcendent that we are forced to look upon it with a degree of dread lest it should be the topmost tower and pinnacle of our country's elevation." Possibly it was, for expansion is not elevation. Certainly those historical dreamers, who enjoy choosing and imagining the eras in which they would choose to be born, find the Elizabethan spaciousness and the Regency splendour equally worthy of life that is lived.

But the solid weight of literary and popular opinion has weighed against him during a century, and his own kin have been reported less than kind. Most educated Englishmen casually subscribe to the ferocious lines by which Byron chronicled the visit of the Fourth George to the disinterred remains of the First Charles and the Eighth Henry;

> "Charles to his people, Henry to his wife,
> In him the double tyrant starts to life:
> Justice and death have mixed their dust in vain,
> Each royal vampire wakes to life again.
> Ah, what can tombs avail, since these disgorge
> The blood and dust of both to mould a George!"

This picturesque epigram may be tempered by the suggestion that, if Charles had known as knowingly as George when

to yield to his ministers, he would not have lost his head, and that, if Queen Caroline had shared the charm and beauty of Anne Boleyn, she would not have been cast *a toro et throno*. George descended to the tomb with many faults and with some talents to be cast into the reckoning, with some mistakes and with many achievements. The moralist and the pamphleteer may separate and distinguish the points of shadow, but the historian must remain impartial to the darkness and to the light which he gathers equally into his garner.

Among the English Kings it has even been supposed impossible to find a parallel to George the Fourth. It is no disparagement to either to say that the Seventh Edward afforded the greatest number of points in common. There were polar differences, for King Edward's pleasures were Bohemian or social without the grossness of Georgian times, and he was as highly blessed in his marriage and in his Queen as George was in both unfortunate. Each was sorely tried while holding the increasingly difficult position of Prince of Wales during long Jubilarian reigns. Each was subjected to tedious restriction and to German education. Each broke the barriers on coming of age, and adopted friends and confidants who stirred the serious objection of a venerable Sovereign. Each became at times victim of his associates, but George was no more to blame for the false running of his horse at Newmarket than Edward for the presence of baccarat under the roof of a host. In the roll-call of British Monarchs George the Fourth and Edward the Seventh triumph as Kings who won the Derby in the sport of Kings. Though King Edward did not show the same interest in Art or adopt a Sheridan or patronise a Lawrence, he sought interesting friends outside the prescribed circles of court and ceremony. Whatever their Teutonic blood, both George and Edward were Latin in sympathy. Each brought about by personal instinct and insistence the good relations which are essential between England and France. It need only be added that each was regally chivalrous to women, and Memoirists have recorded of each the pleasant trait of showing studied politeness to old ladies

who had reached the charming chrysalis stage between butterfly and angel. But when they admired beauty their taste was unexceptionable. They were both British sportsmen, and allowed their sense of fair play to develop a corresponding sympathy for Ireland. Peace in Ireland and with France was the dream of each, and though foiled of one, each achieved and bequeathed the other as a supreme legacy to the statesmen of England. Neither would have failed of a commanding position in the line of the Flavian Emperors, when the world was not the unhappier for the imperial and even divine position accorded to her all too human rulers.

In a letter to the Duke the King left noble words worthy of himself and of his people and of the Iron Disciplinarian himself (August 11, 1828): "I am quite aware that I am drawing fast to the close of my life; it may be the will of the Almighty that a month, a week, nay a day, may call the Lord High Admiral to be my successor. I love my brother William—I always have done so to my heart's core; and I will leave him the example of what the inherent duty of a King of this country really is. The Lord High Admiral shall strictly obey the laws enacted by Parliament. . . ."

George the Fourth was the wisest if most stubborn of constitutional monarchs. To democrats and despots he left an example which was not the less regal for affecting the golden mean.

PLATE X.—THE PASSING OF GEORGE THE FOURTH (THE GHOST OF THE KING, THE DUKES OF WELLINGTON, CLARENCE AND CUMBERLAND)

Facing p. 182

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# APPENDICES

## APPENDIX I

### Letters of George the Fourth Preserved in the British Museum

(*MS.* 33133) *George Prince of Wales to Lord Pelham.*

(*April* 29, 1802).

"It has just been mentioned to me that a case occurred some time ago in which the Petition of Right signed by the King was transmitted to the late Earl of Clare and by him put into a course of trial in Ireland. As the intimation does not carry with it quite that authentic detail (which in such a matter would not be difficult to obtain), I doubt the accuracy of the description more especially since Lord Eldon has not appeared aware of such an instance. Still, as it is stated to me that the business passed through your office, it appears not only advisable but necessary to ascertain without delay a fact that would afford an important guidance in the affair which I have laid before the Chancellor. Therefore I beg of you, my dear Lord, to have the kindness to inform me whether there now exists any record or has existed any trace of such a transaction in your office during the time of your predecessor or predecessors."

*Private and Confidential* (*Brighton, September* 28, 1802).

"Many thanks for your kind communication. Had I been (asked) to have dictated the letter to Lord Whitworth, it could not have been comprised in words I think so judicious as those you have put it into or so completely analogous to my feelings and intentions. I have had a long and confidential conversation with Lord Thurlow, whom I am certain, when you chance to converse with him, you will find most perfectly well disposed and most particularly so to yourself as he has expressed himself in the strongest and handsomest manner possible concerning you."

*George the Fourth to Wellesley* (*concerning Percy, the Miscreant who attempted to poison him*).

(*March* 30, 1822.)

"*Most Private.* If he is insane, his insanity should be ascertained by medical agency and dealt with as the melancholy

circumstances of his situation would necessarily call for: and it would indeed be a question of great delicacy to decide even, when his sanity should return, what period of time the unhappy man should be entrusted with the care of his own conduct. I have no personal apprehensions, but to entertain a stratagem against the life of a Sovereign involves so much of peril to others that it is impossible to look at it, however obscured it may be with improbabilities as to the practical result, without serious apprehension. If the man is sane, there must be a motive, and that motive must be founded in wickedness. The man must therefore not be let loose until the matter is fairly made out to your satisfaction."

## APPENDIX II

The following letters from the *Lansdowne Papers* kindly supplied by Lord Kerry illustrate the correspondence of George the Fourth at different periods of his life and in different moods. To Lord Keith he poured forth in fulsome terms his ambition to conciliate Ireland, and his love of that country appears in inverse ratio to his love for Pitt. His electioneering instinct appears in his anxiety to leave no avenue untried to return Lord Lansdowne for Cambridge University at the decease of Pitt. As King his notes become as terse as his ever-ready politeness will allow, whether in appointing Peers or a Poor Brother to the Charterhouse.

*George Prince of Wales to Lord Keith.*

"I am extremely obliged to you for your kind letter and the communication you made to me of your interview with the Minister. I foresaw the objection he would be likely to start and more so than Mr. Dundas. I therefore have desired Ogilvie to make out some precedents from history of former Princes of Wales, who have been in similar situations in other parts of their father's dominions, and which, though Mr. Pitt is pretty well versed in history and can bring precedents when he wants them for himself by way of not asking an Act of Indemnity for issuing the public money in foreign loans even whilst Parliament is sitting, without the knowledge or consent of Parliament, still in the present instance may have

escaped him, or rather he may wish to pass over, in order to furnish him with an excuse for not doing what he does not know, how, otherwise plausibly to get rid of. When the paper is made out I have written to Ogilvie to carry it to you and I will beg of you then to have a further interview with Mr. Pitt and put it into his hands or Mr. Dundas's, accompanied by such remarks as must naturally occur to a person of your sense, knowledge and abilities. However I must desire you notwithstanding what has past, to endeavour to see Mr. Dundas, and to converse over as soon as possible all these topics with him, as well as what I said to you upon other subjects. I know very well that they are always glad by way of liberating themselves, to throw everything upon the King's shoulders, and if they really do so, it is wicked in the extreme, as it is their duty always to endeavour to keep up the best understanding, but we well know that had they really a desire to carry a point for me they would do it, but the fact is that I am always being sacrificed to some one else, as by giving up with respect to me, they desire something else for someone else, and which would have been refused at another moment."

*George Prince of Wales to Lord Keith.*

(*February* 20, 1797.)

" Yesterday I received your letter as well as that enclosing Mr. Dundas' to you, but I could not write by the return of post, for the letters were delivered out only just as the fresh post was in its departure for London. I might answer you in the same mode as it appears to me that Mr. Dundas has wished to adopt that of writing a letter upon nothing, merely for the sake of conveying to me, that he is offended at the line of conduct I have adopted to him, as if it was not owing to that most impertinent and open breach of faith, which so far from denying he appears to glory in, to judge from the letter which he wrote me now almost two years back, which I showed you the other day, and of which no one can be so perfect a judge as you were present at the interviews which took place between Mr. Dundas and myself, but I understand completely the drift of Mr. Dundas in his letter, which is, to strike the first blow, but it resembles, as it really is, the essence of the old

French proverb, *celui qui s'accuse s'excuse*. However, to come to the point as shortly as possible and to dismiss trifling circumstances for things of greater magnitude. The prospect of the mission you have been so good as to undertake, was not to keep open a hurt but to endeavour to heal one, if such was upon trial found to be the inclination of Mr. Dundas, and which I should think he in particular ought on every account to wish especially at such a serious moment as the present one is to them and to the whole nation pregnant with every species of mischief and ready to burst over their heads. You were not to discuss merely the affairs of Ireland but many other topics with him; the affairs of Ireland merely as far as it was my wish to go there, for the sake of conciliating the minds of men in that country to this country, and of cementing a reunion between the two nations, by such means and such only means as I am confident can effect so necessary and so desirable an object. As to the rest that you have in charge to say to him I shall not recapitulate what we have so frequently conversed over; but I must confess I wish that you should make Mr. Dundas feel that it is *me* that have reason to be offended with *him* and not *him* with *me*, on account of his conduct to me, but particularly on account of that letter which I referred to in the early part of this epistle, it is therefore that I still wish you should see him and talk quietly and composedly with him and in the manner I have laid down for you in the foregoing pages. You may safely add that I am ready to go to Ireland not only now but at any future period to endeavour to restore tranquillity, if it is not too late for my hopes of success, but I am willing to go at any rate to attempt it, as it is not from self-vanity, but from the various pressing invitations that I have received, that I am confident that no measure could tend so much to the restoring general tranquillity to that disturbed and much injured country as my going Lord Deputy there. However at all events, if our plans are not to succeed, I must desire to have Mr. Connolly's letter returned, but the other paper you will leave at all events in the hands of the Ministers as I mean it should remain a permanent testimony of my sentiments respecting the present awful crisis. The whole of this letter you may either read or recite to Mr. Dundas as you please but not put into his hands and this I do, my dear Keith,

as a proof how happy I am at all times in following as far as it is in my power the advice of so old and so truly an attached friend as yourself, and assuring to you likewise that I have not in any other parts of my intercourse with Mr. Dundas conducted myself with less temper, than you so judiciously recommend at the present moment, but there are some things which flesh and blood cannot bear, I mean the adding insult to injury. I have already trespassed too long upon you. I shall therefore conclude with assuring you, that there is no one in whose zeal and honour I express more confidence than in yours or anyone for whom I entertain a higher regard than for yourself."

*George Prince of Wales to Lord Lansdowne.*

(*January* 22, 1806.)

"On my return home late this evening I found your very obliging note and I trust that I need not add that, wherever your wishes or your interest may be concerned, my best endeavours besides my best wishes can never be wanting. Having previous to the reception of your note understood that it was your intention upon the expected vacancy for the University of Cambridge to offer yourself I immediately commenced the canvassing such friends I could directly apply to and who were nearest at hand, not one as yet has refused me their support and seemed upon your name being proposed to meet it with the strongest enthusiasm and I have not the smallest doubt that the same success will attend you through the whole of your canvass. All I entreat of you is, though I am fearful, that neither my weight nor my interest are as great at Cambridge as they are or may be at Oxford, still that, whenever it can be of the smallest utility to your views, that you will make such use of my name as may in the most remote degree even be serviceable to you, and that you will without the least degree of reserve or delicacy write to me or to any one near me; to point out any quarter, where by any application of mine I may be likely to secure you any additional support. Having said thus much I shall continue to send and to speak to everyone of whom I have the smallest knowledge and, should there be any others that as yet I am not apprised of, I must trust to your sending me their names and perhaps how they

are to be approached and got at; and you may depend upon my exerting myself to the utmost of my ability and most indefatigably upon the present occasion."

*King George IV to Lord Lansdowne.*

*Private* (*August* 22, 1827).

"The King sends his regards to Lord Lansdowne. There is a poor old man of the name of James Manseell, whom the King would wish Lord Lansdowne to place in the situation of a poor brother in the Charterhouse, and which is now vacant. The poor man is to be found at Mr. Roberts', King's Mews, Pavilion."

*Private* (*January* 17, 1828).

"The King sends his very kind regards to Lord Lansdowne. The King has granted the title of Durham to Mr. Lambton as the King understands that Mr. Lambton preferred it. The list the King desires thus to stand;

Mrs. Canning,
Sir Henry Wellesley,
Sir Charles Stuart,
Sir William A'Court,
Lord Rosebery,
Lord Clanwilliam,
Mr. Lambton,
Mr. Bartle Wilbraham."

(*January* 19, 1828).

"The King is most truly sensible of the concern and kind consideration manifested by Lord Lansdowne at the King's Indisposition. The King desires to acknowledge this dutiful attention on the part of Lord Lansdowne with every sentiment of the kindest feeling. The King hopes to have it in his power to receive Lord Lansdowne at the Royal Lodge on Tuesday next at three o'clock for the purpose of relieving Lord Lansdowne from that official responsibility to which Lord Lansdowne's note particularly refers. The King naturally concludes that Lord Goderich acquainted Lord Lansdowne in detail of all that passed at Lord Goderich's last audience with the King:

the result, the consequence of necessity speaks for itself, but the King desires in conclusion distinctly to state that Lord Lansdowne has not been called upon to execute any one responsible act since Lord Goderich declared the government to be virtually dissolved but what had already been settled by the King with Lord Goderich as the King's responsible adviser."

## APPENDIX III

### Letters of Mrs. Fitzherbert and George the Fourth

The following letters of Mrs. Fitzherbert are taken from a packet in the *Fitzherbert Papers* marked:

7. Letters sealed by the executors, March 31, 1837. G. H. From Mrs. Fitzherbert to H.R.H. the Prince of Wales.

Packets 1 to 5 were the papers preserved in Coutts' Bank and published in Mr. W. M. Wilkins' work on *Mrs. Fitzherbert and George IV* in part.

*The Prince of Wales to Mrs. Fitzherbert.*

London (*Jan. thirteenth*, 1809). Franked Cornwall.

My dearest Maria,—I yesterday received your kind letter, which afforded me the most heartfelt satisfaction, as it conveyed the glad tidings that the dear child and yourself are both so well. The more I learn from you respecting Melle. Corney, the more reason we have to thank Heaven for the escape our dear little angel has had; but now, after knowing all that you do about this impossible character, a little more or a little less can never operate in the scale of her abominations, and after, as I suppose that you have felt it your duty to acquaint Lady Grey with the dangers to which her children have been or might be exposed, let us for heaven's sake dismiss this vile wretch with all her infernal machinations as the past from our minds, further, than preserving them in our own breasts as a most useful lesson and memento against the possibility in any shape of the recurrence of similar horrors. To be sure, nothing is half bad enough for her, therefore for God's sake let her go to the Devil her own way, which she is sure sooner or later to accomplish. I think that your description of her successor is

everything that one can wish, and, from the observations I have been able to make myself, that you will find her fully adequate to the minor branches of the education of this darling child. Her principles being good, every other deficiency will be supplied by Masters, for I believe that the world has never yet produced a Governess that was competent to instruct in all the necessary accomplishments without their aid. But, after all, my dearest Maria, the best security is that which you have within yourself, for your tender care and watchful eye will secure beyond possibility that her infantine and pure mind, as well as her dear and little susceptible heart, should never be led astray. Everybody appears to be in the utmost state of anxiety for the next accounts from Spain, which must be of the utmost importance, as they must bring us the accounts of the recent [ ] of our troops and probably of a most desperate engagement previous to its being able to be accomplished. I have had the best accounts of the conduct of my regiment, which is extremely gratifying to me, as you will readily believe. The moment anything arrives you shall have it. Before I conclude I must just beg of you, if it is not attended with any inconvenience to you, to give Miss Jeffreys* from me the hundred pounds which you mentioned, and which McMahon shall replace to your account with the quarter, when the warrants are signed, and which has not yet been done, but which must be done in a few days. And now adieu, my dearest Maria, and with a thousand loves and kisses more tender than ever to dearest Minney. I remain, ever very affectionately yours,

GEORGE P.

CARLTON HOUSE,
*January* 13, 1809.

*Mrs. Fitzherbert to the Prince of Wales* (1809).

I trust Y.R.H. will permit me to explain the reasons why I could not possibly accept the honour of your invitation to the Pavilion for yesterday and for this evening. The very great incivilities I have received these two years just because I obeyed your orders in going there was too visible to everyone

* The new governess.

present and too poignantly felt by me to admit of my putting myself in a situation of again being treated with such indignity for whatever may be thought of me by some individuals, it is well known Y.R.H. four-and-twenty years ago placed me in a situation so nearly connected with your own that I have a claim upon you for protection. I feel I owe it to myself not to be insulted under your roof with impunity. The influence* you are now under, and the conduct of one of your servants, I am sorry to say, has ye appearance of your sanction and support, and renders my situation in your house, situated as I am, impossible any longer to submit to. I shall therefore, with all due respect and duty to Y.R.H., take the liberty to inform you that, as my absence from the Pavilion may be construed in various ways, it is my intention to make it known to the public to-morrow morning that I am absolutely under the necessity by ye arrogance and unjustifiable conduct of Mr. Blomfield† driven out of Y.R.H.'s house. The world will then know the truth, and they will judge as they think proper. Something is due to my character and conduct, both of which will bear the strictest scrutiny, particularly with regard to everything that concerns Y.R.H., for after all that has passed between Y.R.H. and myself I did not think human nature could have borne what I have had to undergo. I should esteem myself much obliged to Y.R.H. to show this letter to H.R.H. the Duke of Clarence. I shall keep a copy to show to my friends, that there may be no misstatements of my conduct. I shall not enter into further details at present, but trust to Y.R.H. to forgive this liberty and to allow me to subscribe myself Y.R.H.'s most obedient and dutiful

MARIA FITZHERBERT.

The disappointment to my dear little girl‡ mortifies me very much.

*Mrs. Fitzherbert to George IV* (1809).

Dear Sir,—It is with the great reluctance I take up my pen to address you upon a subject very painful to my feelings, and which I had flattered myself I never should have been com-

* Lady Hertford's.
† Equerry to the Prince, afterwards made a peer
‡ Minney Seymour.

pelled to do, and which nothing but the awkward situation I am in could have drawn from me. The subject I allude to is of a pecuniary nature, and notwithstanding every precaution on my part, Mr. Porden has thought proper to outrun the estimate he undertook to build my house at Brighton for to the amount of near £300. It is a peculiar hard case, as I had scraped every farthing I could collect, and had frequently deprived myself of many comforts to enable me to pay him the sum he asked to build my house, which, to the amount of £6,000 —the price he undertook it for—was paid to him before I ever took possession of my habitation. This sum neither includes what I paid for ye ground or furniture. This conduct of his is shamefull, and falls very heavy upon me, because I had piqued myself that neither my House in Town or at Brighton had ever cost you one farthing, and I feel particularly distressed at this circumstance, as it is the first time since I was acquainted with you that I ever mentioned my having been in any difficulties of this nature, for tho' we now have been married three-and-twenty years I never at any period solicited you for assistance, let my embarrassments have been ever so great, or ever solicited you for an increase of income, which I certainly always felt I was entitled to from your having voluntarily and unsolicited pledged yourself, not only to Mr. Errington but several others, from the beginning of my acquaintance with you, to give me an income of £10,000 per ann., instead of which till very lately I have subsisted upon an allowance of £3,000, now increased to £5,000. I mean no reproaches to you, Sir, for not having kept your word, for I should have felt more gratified and happy in giving up to Y.H. what I had then in receiving the sum alluded to, could it on any occasion have contributed in the smallest degree to your comfort, for the first object of my heart was your happiness and prosperity, and I would rather have lived in beggary than to have distressed you, or by any mean, dirty tricks have taken advantage of you or have endeavoured thro' any selfish motives [ ] a property of you which I know I might easily have done had I been so disposed. But to return to my subject, I know it is quite impossible for me to pay Mr. Porden. I have twice been threatened with arrests. I shall feel no degradation in going to a jail. It is no debt of extravagant folly, but a circumstance that will happen now

and then—that of being deceived by those we place confidence in.

Permit me, Sir, to apologize for this unpleasant intrusion, but as all conversations on such subjects are extremely distressing I have taken the liberty of transmitting them on paper that there might be no mistake or misunderstanding; and I should esteem myself much obliged if you would condescend to send me an answer in writing. I thought it my duty to inform you of these circumstances, for which I hope I shall not incur your displeasure, for as your wife I feel I have still a claim upon your protection, which I trust is not entirely alienated from me, as the whole of my conduct towards you is grounded on that foundation. Before I conclude, I must add one word more, which is with respect to the House at Parsons' Green. It may appear to you that knowing myself in debt I am very imprudent in taking another House to add to my difficulties. This, I beg leave to say, is not the case. Last year, when you quitted me, the Berkeleys were so kind as to offer me an asylum, but by your account of the many unpleasant things you informed me were said upon that subject I thought it cruel to trespass further on their kindness. Several of my friends have with the greatest generosity and kindness assisted me to procure the place above mentioned, which I am sure I shall find great comfort to myself and advantage to my child, which has been the primary object of a small place in the country, and being so near Town she will have the same advantage as if in London.

*Mrs. Fitzherbert to the Prince of Wales* (*copy of letter to the Prince written June ye* 7, 1811, *when persuaded by Lady Hertford not to admit me to his table*).

Sir,—After the conversation Your Royal Highness held with me yesterday I am sure you will not be surprised that I have sent my excuses for not obeying your commands for Wednesday next. Much as it has ever been my wish during a period of near thirty years to save you from every embarrassment in my power, yet there are situations when one ought not entirely to forget what is due to oneself. You, Sir, are not aware, in your anxiety to fill your table with persons only of the highest rank, that, by excluding her who now addresses you merely for want

of those titles that others possess, you are excluding the person who is not unjustly suspected by the world of possessing in silence unassumed and unsustained a Rank given her by yourself above that of any other person present. Having never forfeited my title to Your Royal Highness's public as well as private consideration by any act of my life, to what could this etiquette be for the first time imputed ? No one, my dear Sir, has proved themselves thro' life less solicitous than myself. But I cannot be indifferent to the fair, honorable appearance of consideration from you, which I have hitherto possessed and which I feel I deserve, and for which reason I can never submit to appear in your house in any place or situation but in that where you yourself first placed me many years ago. Yesterday I was too much surprised, when you informed me that from my want of rank I would not be admitted to your table, to be able to express my feelings in due bounds; and to-day, the impression remaining unabated, I sent my excuse to Colonel Thomas, but on reflection I think it more candid and open to lay my reasons before you, begging you at the same time to believe me, etc.

*Mrs. Fitzherbert to the Prince Regent* (1813).

The load of public business, which Your Royal Highness must have had to occupy your time, has rendered me unwilling to press myself on your recollection; and the hope that I should find you remembering me without my having the pain of requesting you to do so, has withheld me from writing sooner; but now that business is considerably over, permit me to urge the promise, when you are still in Town, to recall to Your Royal Highness's recollection myself and my situation. Placed by you, Sir, when the memorable event of our Union took place in ye year '85, under circumstances which rendered you the only person in this world, while life endured, that I could ever look up to for protection and support, bound by every tie that Honor or Religion could impose, and utterly precluded from forming any other connection for the future comfort, support or happiness of my life. You were at that period pleased to settle on me £10,000 per ann., as the income befitting the situation you placed me in. The act, Sir, was a voluntary one of your own, for never had I solicited any provision from you. On your

honor, on your attachment, and on your generosity I had thrown myself, my own interest entirely abandoned. Your difficulties in money matters put it out of your power to fulfil ye settlement or to give me more than £3,000 per ann. I was frequently distressed, but I did not complain. It was then (as it has been ever since) my sole wish to save you every pain and keep every dilemma away from you whatever I might have suffered. I availed myself of every resource in my power; even the ornaments Your Royal Highness bestowed upon me were often converted into the means of supplying wants, which you could not then relieve. But these were difficulties, not sorrows, and I hoped the time would come when all difficulties would vanish. They were diminished about three years ago by an additional £3,000 per ann. which Y.R.H. added to the former three. Possessed of these means, I endeavoured to discharge past debts as far as my abilities went. The situation and power Y.R.H. is now placed in flatters me I may now look for care in my circumstances for the first time in the course of nearly twenty-eight years. From your liberality I hope this: from your justice I claim it. The sad consciousness, which at moments you must feel, how cruelly you have used me on points of far more importance than the present—such recollection will, I trust, teach your heart on this inferior subject at least to do me justice. Forgive me, Sir, if I have permitted my feelings to lead me further than the point on which I solely meant at this moment to trouble you, and to which I now return. Permit me to receive henceforward the allowance you promised me twenty-eight years ago—an allowance which the times have not increased in value. The arrears may be inconvenient to Y.R.H. to grant. I will not intrude any longer upon Y.R.H., but with my best wishes for your welfare and happiness, I have the honour to subscribe myself respectfully,

MARIA FITZHERBERT.

*Mrs. Fitzherbert to the Prince Regent.*

*August* 15, 1814.

Sir,—After the very ill success of my former application, it is with much painful reluctance and from the absolute necessity of my situation only that I am forced to address Y.R.H. upon the subject of my income, feeling as I do that all the pecuniary

difficulties I endure originate from the very scanty allowance you made me for several years; yet you must do me the justice to allow that I never uttered a complaint or asked your assistance at that time, because I knew your income was then so limited that you had it not in your power; and to prevent you suffering uneasiness on that score, I was frequently driven by necessity to borrow money, and about nine years ago, as you know, mortgaged my house to procure absolute necessaries both for yourself and me. It is true, Sir, that the last four years have increased my income to £6,000 per ann.—a sum which is not now as much as £3,000 was ten or twelve years ago; but this income I have not yet enjoyed, having been obliged to apply it, as far as I could, towards the paying off of the old debts of former times—debts from which with the most rigid economy I have not been able to extricate myself. These debts, Sir, have never been increased by any ostentation or extravagance of mine. The whole of them were incurred when we were living together. I will not pain Y.R.H. by reminding you how those debts arose or for whom they were contracted. Need I say more? You will, I am sure, do me justice to acknowledge that I never was an interested person; that I never, which I certainly might have done, solicited for or benefited either my family or my friends at your expense. I confess I have a degree of pride which makes me revolt at the idea of asking assistance from anyone, but I do not feel this in addressing Y.R.H. for the performance of a promise. What is due to me is not degrading for me to receive, tho' painful in the extreme for me to ask, and what I wish Y.R.H. had remembered to do for me of yourself, for which I should have felt much gratitude. But not to trouble you with more details, let me briefly add that, tho' I have no desire of richer comforts at my time of life, and under my unfortunate circumstances become necessary, it is creditable to yourself, Sir, that I should not be without them. I can add no stronger motive, yet one other my heart leads me to name, that under Y.R.H.'s sanction I have made myself responsible (and I have never for a moment regretted it) for the proper education and maintenance of my beloved child. She is everything I could wish her to be. Nothing is spared as far as I am able; and I should grieve, as her expenses increase with her age, if I had it not in

my power to finish her education in the manner she deserves. Allow me, Sir, to request you will pay some little attention to this letter, and I beg I may have an answer from yourself. It is most probably the last time you will be troubled by a letter from me. It is my intention to go soon to the Continent. I am not certain what my creditors may do when they hear that I am leaving the country. It is through your enabling me to lay them that many distressing discussions may be stayed which we ought both on every account to prevent becoming public. I have reason to believe, Sir, that your ear has been frequently assailed by indignant insinuation against me. I have been accused of entering into Cabals against Y.R.H. and doing you all the mischief in my power. No asseverations are necessary on my part. I disdain the charge. The evidences of the contrary are with me, and I thank the Almighty that throughout all my bitter trials I have hitherto had forbearance enough never to utter one syllable that could have affected your interests, made you an enemy, or given you any cause of resentment towards me. You ought to know me better, Sir, than to believe such idle representations. There can be no stronger proof of these falsehoods than what you can yourself give—that aware as you are of how much I have in my power, that power has remained entirely unused by me. I ought and do apologize for the length of this letter, but I am leaving this country. My health is not good, life is uncertain. Let me implore you, therefore, to answer this letter and to believe that, notwithstanding all your prejudices against me and all the misery and wretchedness you have entailed upon me, I most sincerely wish you every degree of happiness, health and prosperity.

MARIA FITZHERBERT.

The new King immediately sent a message asking her to call on him and the Queen at the Pavilion. Mrs. Fitzherbert demurred, and the King paid her the first visit. She placed her marriage certificate in his hands, and he immediately authorised her to wear widow's weeds for George IV. and the use of the royal liveries. She returned to Court and re-enjoyed the peculiar position which had been denied her since 1811. Lady Jersey was dead, Lady Hertford forgotten, and Lady Conyngham retired. The King would have been willing

to acknowledge the fact of her marriage publicly, but the Duke of Wellington sternly forbade, and was anxious even to destroy all surviving papers. Mrs. Fitzherbert was afraid that many of her letters had fallen into the hands of Sir William Knighton, the late King's secretary, whom she regarded as an enemy. According to Greville, Knighton made an attempt on her papers; " although a stranger to Mrs. Fitzherbert he called one day at her house when she was ill in bed, insisted on seeing her and forced his way into her bedroom. She contrived to get rid of him without his getting anything out of her." Accordingly Lords Stourton and Albemarle arranged with the Duke that all should be burnt except those which were sealed in Coutts' Bank. Knighton's seal was added as an executor of the King, and three years later Lord Stourton wrote to Mrs. Fitzherbert (October 16, 1836): " I see by the papers that Sir W. Knighton is no more. All his concerns, as I have heard from yourself and general report, are enough to make one moralize on the fleeting emptiness of things below. The Court cards he built with so successfully for a moment, where are they now ? As far as you are concerned, I feel an interest in knowing that you are satisfied that your papers will not pass into executors' hands, for I hope he kept back no copies, but acted fairly at last. This will now probably be soon known. His seal is to your private papers at Coutts' Bank, but that can be of no sort of consequence, I presume, to you. But it will perhaps strengthen your wish to inspect them yourself, if only to show that you are mistress to have the entire disposal of them at your pleasure." These Papers were removed to the Windsor Archives by Edward VII.

## APPENDIX IV

### The Strange Story of James Ord

That Mrs. Fitzherbert bore a child to George the Fourth has been believed, asserted and denied. We have investigated the story that a son of their marriage was privately conveyed to America and educated by the Jesuits at Georgetown College at the expense of the British Embassy. This gentleman, by the name of James Ord, existed certainly, for we have seen

his picture preserved at the College, but the picture was the only evidence shown to us to support the tradition. It is noticeable that the College was founded by Archbishop Carroll, who as tutor in the Weld family had been consecrated at Lulworth, Mrs. Fitzherbert's first married home, and was intimately connected with the old Catholic families of England.

We have taken the following summary from the *Ord Papers*, of which twenty-five copies were printed in America in 1896, " for the sole purpose of preserving true copies of writings liable to destruction together with a statement of various facts and traditions received chiefly from dignitaries of the Holy Catholic Church."

It appears that James Ord at different times in his life made strange statements to his children. He was brought from Spain to America in 1790, "and I believe I was about four years of age at the time." He was brought by an uncle named James Ord, who was employed by Mr. Brent, a nephew of Archbishop Carroll of Baltimore. In 1800 he was placed at the Jesuit College in Georgetown founded by Archbishop Carroll, who always paid his fees. Later he became a Novice, and the record states

> " James Ord, born in England, entered 1806.
> First vows taken in the novitiate at Georgetown, October 10, 1808.
> Left the Society in 1811."

Otherwise there is not a scrap of information until Gilmary Shea wrote in his History of the College in 1891, " James Ord, son of George IV and his lawful wife Mrs. Fitzherbert, was enrolled among the students." This was the " positive tradition " among the Fathers of the College. Mr. James Ord inquired once of his uncle his birthday and was told, " I do not know, James. If you had your rights in England you would be something very great. God forgive those who have wronged you." He afterwards revealed that he was not his uncle, but that his sister, who had lost her own child, had adopted James Ord. He died while James Ord was at Georgetown College. " His illness was sudden and I was sent for in great haste. He recognised me when I arrived and said, ' James, I have something of the greatest importance to communicate to you.

But in a few minutes he fell into a state of unconsciousness and never spoke again." James Ord left the Jesuits, and was a Midshipman in the United States Navy at the time of the War of 1812 with England. In 1833 James Ord put traditions together, and wrote to Mrs. Fitzherbert asking news of his parentage. There was no answer. Father Matthews, the friend of his uncle, told him " that my uncle really knew very little only that I was a child of one of the sons of George III, and he thought it probable that it was the Duke of York, as he had obtained the position in Spain for him."

The descendants of James Ord made inquiries at times, and in 1894 a letter was forwarded from Mr. Basil Fitzherbert of Swynnerton to say, "The mystery, if mystery there be, of issue of Mrs. Fitzherbert's marriage is probably hidden in Coutts's Bank. It has always been thought that there was a child, but it seems strange that in such a case the mother should have left all her personalty between Mrs. Damer (Minney Seymour) and Miss Smythe, making no provision directly for her own offspring."

## APPENDIX V

### The Mystery of Mrs. Fitzherbert's Children

It is obvious that Mrs. Fitzherbert need not have shrunk from bearing children, for as a Catholic she believed she was the true wife of the Prince. If any children had been born, they would under the peculiar circumstances have suffered rather for the virtue than for the sins of their parents, for they would have been legitimate, and as such more necessary to conceal than in reverse conditions. The illegitimate offspring of the King could have been easily accommodated behind bars sinister in the Peerage. But any suspicion of legitimacy could cause trouble. As the pamphleteer Withers wrote of Mrs. Fitzherbert; " H.R.H. may have children. It may be her whim to educate them in the principles of Popery. And the good people of England may be put to the expense and trouble of another Revolution." Now this would exactly have been Mrs. Fitzherbert's whim, and it is interesting that the Catholic Register of Baptisms at Brighton has two pages cut out during certain

years of the Prince's association with Mrs. Fitzherbert. Lord Mornington refers to Mrs. Fitzherbert being thought to be with child (*Rutland Papers*). But there was no public acknowledgment and Lord Stourton wrote to Lord Albemarle in 1833 in Mrs. Fitzherbert's interests as to " whether Mrs. Fitzherbert might not be advised to write at the back of the marriage certificate: *no issue from this marriage.*" We learn from Lord Stourton that " to this she smilingly objected on the score of delicacy." She never denied children.

However, in the year before her death she wrote a paper which remains among the *Fitzherbert Papers* as follows:

" I Maria Fitzherbert desire my executors to employ the will signed by George Prince of Wales in support of my character with Posterity, but I do not wish to found upon it any pecuniary claims on the personalty of His late Majesty George the Fourth.

So witness my hand.....

this ..... day ..... 1836.

I Maria Fitzherbert moreover testify that my union with George, Prince of Wales, was without issue.

..... witness

(All unsigned).

This document remained unsigned. In June, 1838, Lord Stourton declared that " no issue followed this union." Mr. Wilkins, who had access to many of the documents preserved in Coutts's Bank, was even more insistent on this point, and so the matter has rested in spite of traditions otherwise both in America and England. The American tradition we have examined and found unproven, but the home tradition attributing mothership on the part of Mrs. Fitzherbert to her adopted nieces is less easily disposed. Mrs. Fitzherbert was certainly more than a mother to both Minney Seymour and Mary Anne Smythe. If the subtle test is applied which of the two she had the " whim " to educate in the Catholic Faith, Minney Seymour falls outside what should be a Catholic mother's principal care. But Mrs. Fitzherbert's namesake Mary Anne Smythe was her child if any, though the evidence is negative.

In the Peerage she is described as the daughter of John Smythe, Mrs. Fitzherbert's brother, and of Mrs. Strickland, a widow. On the other hand, according to family information, John Smythe had no children. Whose child was she ? We are not prepared to say. Mary Anne Smythe married the Hon. Edward Stafford-Jerningham, brother of Lord Stafford. The present Lord Stafford is her grandson, and as head of his family permits us to quote his personal belief in the family tradition that his grandmother was the daughter of George the Fourth and Mrs. Fitzherbert. " I think that you might say that there is strong circumstantial evidence, but owing to Mrs. Fitzherbert's papers having been removed from the Bank it is very hard to prove." We should have no hesitation in adding ours to a belief, which is not injurious to Mrs. Fitzherbert's honour since any child of hers was legitimate in the eyes of the Church, nor to the present Royal Family, since the child was unlawful in the law of England. But it is a point which an historian of George the Fourth may not shirk.

Father Thurston, S.J., in an able criticism of Wilkins' book (*Month*, January, 1906), adds the tradition received from Lady Clifford, who as Miss Hercy employed Mrs. Fitzherbert's midwife and " managed to surprise her into the admission that she knew what had become of Mrs. Fitzherbert's children. They were, it seems, always separated from her and brought up without knowledge of their origin." Father Thurston asks what was contained in the " interesting and affecting paper " which Wilkins omitted to print, and which, according to Lord Stourton, reduced William the Fourth to tears and the offer of a Duchess's Coronet, which she refused without the King quoting the lines Shakespeare propounded to Anne Boleyn:

> " But I pray you,
> What think you of a Duchess ? Have you limbs
> To bear that load of title ?"

Father Thurston concludes his article, " Of the important letter written by the Prince on June 11, 1799, only the following extract is quoted: Thank God my witnesses are living, your uncle and my brother besides Harris, whom I shall call upon as having been informed by me of every, even the minutest, circumstance of our marriage: Surely the letter

containing this passage must have been of sufficient importance to be printed entire." We agree with Father Thurston "that other papers besides those mentioned in Lord Stourton's schedule were included in the packet," of which Wilkins prints two letters, and therefore "Mr. Wilkins' book leaves some shadow of mystery hanging over the papers preserved so long at Coutts' Bank."

## APPENDIX VI

### Mrs. Fitzherbert's Papal Brief

George the Fourth's marriage with Mrs. Fitzherbert was inextricably entangled with the Catholic Church, the French Revolution, and the Pope. Her Catholicism naturally contended against his early Jacobinism. They were caricatured together attending a British *Assemblée Nationale* at Fox's house amid the royal and noble British Marats and Robespierres. Mrs. Fitzherbert's influence seemed to prevail, when the Prince, who slashed Burke's *Reflexions on the French Revolution* as "a farrago of nonsense," sent his carriages from Brighton to Shoreham to rescue the exiled Benedictine nuns, who settled in England under his protection. The Prince presided at their first Chapter, standing while the afflicted ladies of France remained seated. The Revolution sent the Sixth Pius into exile, whence it was impossible to send Mrs. Fitzherbert the Brief alleged by Mr. Wilkins. The result of a private inquiry in the Vatican Archives is as follows: "Mgr. Mercati looked for the Brief himself, but returned to say that there were no Briefs of that year in the Vatican Archives because from February, 1798, until August, 1799, Pius the Sixth was not in Rome. He died in Valence in August, 1799. His successor, Pius the Seventh, was elected Pope in Venice in March, 1800, and did not enter Rome until July, 1800. Wilkins' statements are therefore wrong."

Wilkins says that Father Nassau went on a mission "between June, 1799, and the end of the year," and returned with "a Papal Brief sealed with the seal of the Fisherman." This cannot be so, though it is interesting to record that in the Conclave of 1800 sat the Cardinal Duke of York *de jure* Henry IX. Lord Stourton mentions "the reply from Rome in a

Brief which, in a moment of panic, she destroyed." But Lord Stourton never saw the document, and may be confusing Mrs. Fitzherbert's destruction of the names of her two witnesses from her Marriage Certificate. The matter remains unsolved with the weight of the Vatican Archives, however, against Mr. Wilkins' surmisal. In any case, as Horace Walpole wrote in 1786, " the matter somehow or other reaches even from London to Rome."

## APPENDIX VII

### Letter of the Duke of Kent to Mrs. Fitzherbert

A Letter, both frank and delicate, after the Princess Charlotte's death, from the Duke of Kent in Brussels to Mrs. Fitzherbert, marks the passing of the Georgian to the Victorian Era, confirming Creevey except in the particular of a date of years (see p. 129):

*December* 1, 1817.

" Unfortunately the same mail that brought me the overwhelming tidings of the dreadful catastrophe at Clairmont also brought a copy of the *Morning Chronicle*, in which the editor in the broadest and I conceive most indelicate manner calls the attention of the country on me, and as I felt that my going over would at once excite the greatest jealousy and suspicion in my three elder brothers and confirm all the papers had announced, I at once saw the necessity of remaining here in retirement and refusing myself the melancholy gratification of following my beloved niece to the grave. I therefore decided not to move unless summoned by the Regent or invited by my poor friend, Prince Leopold. As therefore neither the command of the one nor the request of the other arrived, I have remained here, and I am confident every real friend of mine will approve of my delicacy. . . . And when to that is added all that I foresee may happen, might perhaps add must happen to myself ere long in consequence, you may imagine how deeply all these considerations must have affected me. Thank God, owing to my abstemious mode of living, and by availing myself of what my own little Garden affords me of taking the air, I have preserved my health, but my heart is half-broke and, when I look at my poor companion of four and twenty years,

I think we may perhaps ere long be imperatively forced by my duties to my family and my country to part, it quite distresses me, and from morning till night I hardly ever have a dry eye. But I strive to think that an all-wise Providence will direct all eventually for the best, and to await the events that may be at hand with resignation and submission.

"You see, my excellent, kind-hearted friend, that I have not forgotten our conversation at the *Hotel d'Angleterre*, and that I but too well foresee what may soon be the case. Still I feel I ought to await what may be my Naval Brother's plans, who no doubt now will resume all his projects of marriage, and being my elder must first be thought of, and I should be wretched to have it thought for a moment I could stand in his way. That point once settled, it will be for me to await and see if I am thought of not by the public voice, for that we know matters little, but by my Eldest Brother and his Government, and if it comes to that I hope I shall have the energy to do my duty, but the sacrifice of so much domestic comfort will be dreadful. Yet even that case can only be thought of, if the means are afforded me amply according to my feelings to provide for the honourable and comfortable independence for life of that individual who has been my sole comfort and companion during so many dreary years which I passed, one may say, almost beyond the Pale of Society. You see how openly I speak to you, but I know you all enter into all my feelings."

(*Fitzherbert Papers.*)

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